

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR APPRENTICES AND EMPLOYERS

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**Emma Nusi**



**Head of Business Improvement &  
Compliance, on behalf of DLS board**

## Change History

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## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the process for apprentices and employers to make a complaint about the service provided by Davies Learning Solutions.

We are committed to delivering a high-quality service and take feedback from apprentices and employers very seriously. It is our aim to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interest of all parties and to address areas where improvement is needed. We are keen to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded.

Through our complaints process we ensure that:

1. Complaints and appeals are treated fairly, consistently, transparently and in a timely manner.
2. Matters of concern can be raised without risk of disadvantage and any matter raised that may be considered in line with the principles of Whistleblowing will receive the same protections available to Whistle Blowers.
3. Where complaints or appeals reveal any failure on our part, we take appropriate action to rectify this for the complainant and to identify any others who may have been adversely affected by the same issue
4. We review aspects of our service in the light of any complaints or appeals;
5. We maintain duties of confidentiality to third parties, or other legal duties, in responding to complaints and appeals.
6. Complaints are logged centrally so that oversight of any emerging trends in complaints or concerns can be assessed by our Compliance Team.

## 2. Definition

### 2.1. An informal complaint

An informal complaint is defined as an issue which an apprentice or employer wishes to raise with a member of our staff, without using the formal complaints process. Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.

### 2.2. A Complaint

A complaint in this policy is defined as 'The expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of an apprentice's learning opportunities, our action or lack of action or the standard of service provided by, or on our behalf'.

### 2.3. An Appeal

An appeal is 'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with assessment decisions about apprentices' End Point Assessment or qualification awards.

## 3. Guide to making a complaint

### 3.1 Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant member of staff at the source of the complaint, or Compliance Team, for apprentices your coach and your workplace line manager. The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner.

Complaints should be raised within 6 months of the event occurring where possible and will only be accepted for investigation following this timeframe where evidence can be provided of why it was not reasonably possible for the complaint to have been raised earlier.

You should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days, with a full response given within 4 weeks. If it is not possible to meet these timeframes you will be contacted and told why and what timeframe you will receive your response in.

Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to you and copy in the Compliance Team at [dlscompliance@davies-group.com](mailto:dlscompliance@davies-group.com) who will record the details of all informal complaints.

If, as employer, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, Davies Learning Solutions will arrange for a representative from your organisation and the Growth and Clients Success Director or other senior manager who is independent of the original complaint to review the complaint together. If following these discussions, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may approach the Chief Operating Officer of Davies Learning Solutions.

If, as an apprentice, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, you may follow the below stages:

### 3.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily through the informal process or within the timescales agreed, or you do not feel that it is appropriate to speak to one of the above members of staff, you may raise a formal complaint with our Lead Quality Manager.

The email should be titled as a complaint and set out the details of the complaint in full, include any evidence you have supporting your concern, what action has been taken to date regarding attempting an informal resolution of your complaint and what would be an appropriate resolution.

The Lead Quality Manager will log the complaint and confirm receipt within 5 working days and will initiate an investigation and provide an outcome in writing within 10 working days.

### **3.3 Stage 3 – Escalation**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation this will then be referred to the Head of Quality and Delivery who will discuss with the complaint with Davies Learning Solutions Chief Operating Officer. You will receive the outcome of this further investigation within 10 working days.

### **3.4 Stage 4 – Complaints Adjudicator**

If after exhausting this process, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can escalate your complaint to the Complaints Adjudicator at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The ESFA can be contacted via the National Apprenticeship helpline by calling 0800 015 0400 or emailing [nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk) or [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk)