LINDEN TREE EDUCATION CENTRE

Learner Complaints Procedure

Our Responsibilities

We are committed to providing a high quality service for our learners, clients and the community we serve.
We will deal with legitimate complaints in a fair, prompt and objective manner.
Complaints will be dealt with without recrimination and learners will not be disadvantaged by raising a complaint.
We will be fair in the treatment of all those who complain irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and constructively. All complaints will be dealt with in confidence but shared with any person who may be the subject of a complaint. The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any staff involved. Complaints made which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious, may result in disciplinary action.
The Head of Centre will be responsible for the management of the Complaints Policy and all learners will be informed whom the Head of Centre is.

Scope of Complaints Procedure

The Procedure deals with complaints arising from:

- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of services for education and training including teaching, course content, tutoring, assessment, feedback on progress and learner support during learning programmes.
- Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the Centre
- Delivery (or lack of delivery) of support services provided by the Centre including administration of fees, enrolment processes, health and safety and learner resource services.
- Unacceptable actions or behaviour by Centre staff and/or other learners in the Centre.

Separate procedures exist for:

- Learner discipline
- Assessment appeals

How to complain

Complaints must be made in writing to the Head of Centre.
Support can be made available for all those involved in a complaint including:

- Representation: parent, guardian, friend or supporter.
- Help with completing the written complaint.
- Induction will provide further details regarding this process.

Informal resolution of complaints

Most complaints should be able to be resolved by discussion between the complainant and the appropriate member of staff. The initial complaint may be made orally or in writing and the member of staff receiving the complaint should make a response within 10 working days, orally or in writing. It is expected that staff are tactful and courteous in dealing with a complaint. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, they should then be guided to using the formal procedure.

Formal procedure

A formal complaint should be made in writing within 15 working days of an incident or action from which the complaint arises, or from the date when the complainant received an oral or written reply to an informal complaint (see above). In exceptional circumstances, a longer period will be considered. The complaint should be sent to the Head of Centre. If the complaint involves the Head of Centre an alternative senior manager will be appointed to manage the process. The complaint will be logged and its receipt will be acknowledged to the complainant within 5 working days.
The Head of Centre will carry out an initial assessment of the complaint within 5 working days. In most cases, complaints will be referred to the appropriate staff for investigation and report. More serious or unusual complaints will be investigated personally by the Head of Centre.

An appropriate Centre Manager will carry out an investigation of the complaint and may interview the complainant; the respondent; witnesses to the matter or events; and anyone they believe may have a role in establishing or disproving the complaint, as necessary. They will prepare a summary and report back to the Head of Centre within 10 working days of the initial assessment.

The Head of Centre will record the outcome of the complaint and either arranges a meeting to deliver the outcome or notify all those involved in writing as appropriate. All outcomes will be confirmed in writing to all those involved.

If the complaint involves a learner, they will be offered support at the meeting. All learners will be encouraged to bring a supporter to the interview. Vulnerable Adults and those under 16 years of age must have the support of their care worker, or a person of their choice, who can act as their advocate and the Head of Centre must be informed.
The formal complaint should be resolved within 25 working days of the receipt of the original formal complaint. If it appears that a decision will not be reached within the due period, those involved will be advised of the need for a longer period.
The decision made will be final but this does not affect an individual's legal rights.

Review of the Complaints Policy and Practice

Once a year the Centre's Senior Management Team will review the Complaints Policy and Practice to include:

- Number of complaints of each type
- Time taken to process complaints
- List of outstanding complaints
- Outcomes to complaints
- Results of appeals
- Analysis of complaints and outcomes by age, gender and ethnicity of complainant

If changes are required the Complaints Policy will be rewritten and all staff and learners will be informed.

A record of all complaints for 3 years will be available to the relevant authorities for audit purposes.

J E Griffiths

Policy Prepared and signed by J E Griffiths.
18/12/2014