



COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- ACE Training aims to be renowned for achieving a high level of customer (Learners, Apprentices, Parents, Employers and Visitors) satisfaction and is committed to continually innovating and improving services for all its customers.
- ACE Training recognises the value of customer feedback and seeks out comments and suggestions that give insight into the customer experience and so inform service design and assist in achieving its goal of continuous improvement.
- Where a customer feels that the service does not meet their expectations, there are customer-friendly and fair procedures for making a complaint. In recognising the potential to turn complainants into advocates, ACE Training places great importance on complaint resolution.

2. Purpose

- To provide a clear and consistent framework for dealing with comments, suggestions and complaints. All Comments, Suggestions and Complaints are monitored and reviewed to ensure continuous improvement and that situations do not reoccur.

3. Scope

- This policy covers all Comments, Suggestions and Complaints by all ACE Training customers, this includes learners on our Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeship programmes, Parents, Employers and Visitors. ACE Training may pass a complaint regarding our subcontracted provision to the provider for resolution, if this is deemed more appropriate. We maintain a role in the process to ensure the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- This policy covers complaints relating to Freedom of Information requests and complaints made against staff, Managers or Directors. This policy also covers complaints relating to data protection, which will be handled under the Data Protection Complaints Procedure.
- If the complaint is about a staff member it may have to be dealt with under our HR procedures if this is deemed more appropriate. If this is the case, the complainant will be informed that this is being dealt with in line with our internal staff disciplinary policy and that there will be no further information provided to the complainant after that point.

4. Definitions

- A comment/suggestion is an idea relating to a possible improvement in the customer experience.
- A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on our behalf.
 - An informal complaint is where a customer expresses dissatisfaction with a service where the issue can be resolved quickly and satisfactorily by the ACE Training staff member communicating with the customer directly and there is no need for an investigation.
 - A formal complaint is a complaint that clearly states it requires formal action to be taken or an informal complaint that is not resolved to the satisfaction of the customer so needs to be handled according to a structured procedure including an investigation.
- A frivolous complaint has no serious purpose or value. It may have little merit and be trivial, however the matter will be looked into and findings reported to the complainant.
- A vexatious complaint is one where it is apparent that the complainant is making a complaint without any merit for the purpose of causing inconvenience, harassment or expense, however the matter will be looked into and findings reported to the complainant.

5. Responsibilities

- ACE Training ensures that all staff involved in the handling of complaints are appropriately trained and made aware of their individual roles and responsibilities in following the policy and related procedures.
- All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and follow all relevant policies and procedures.
- Directors are responsible for investigating and resolving complaints according to the timescales set out in the complaints procedure and for ensuring that improvement points are addressed in quality improvement measures.

- The Operations Director is responsible for the central overview of complaints across all provision and for monitoring compliance with standards.
- The Operations Director has an overview of comments, suggestions and complaints, oversees the internal verification of complaints, and monitors complaints for emerging themes and learning points and reports to the other Directors on key trends and emerging shortfalls.

6. Policy Commitments

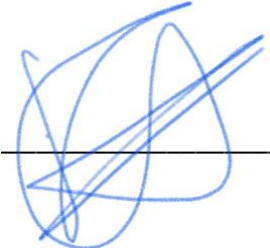
- We expect staff to take responsibility for recognising and resolving all informal complaints immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant, they are required to report these immediately to the Operations Director who will monitor the situation and outcome.
- Learners may appoint a representative to submit a complaint or appeal on their behalf.
- Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties or Mental Health Issues will be offered independent support, advice and guidance to engage effectively with the complaints procedures.
- All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way.
- All formal complaints will be fully investigated if they are made within three months of the incident giving rise to the complaint unless there is a reasonable reason for a delay.
- We will follow set procedures for dealing with complaints along with timeframes for seeking a solution.
- We aim to satisfactorily respond to all complaints first time round but will provide opportunity to appeal if the customer thinks the issue was not dealt with or the process was not followed in a fair and objective way.
- We will keep a central log of all comments and suggestions and one central Complaints Tracker.
- We will regularly review patterns and trends within comments and complaints received and use this information to continually improve our service. The Operations Director reviews and discusses suggestions and complaints together with the other Directors on a regular basis.
- We will ensure that all investigations are conducted objectively and that outcomes are fair and consistent, through an internal verification process comprising monthly reviews of a sample of complaints by an independent and impartial Director. The results of the reviews will be included in the Quality Improvement Plan.
- Reports on the outcomes of formal complaints along with the emerging themes are produced by the Operations Director and are made available to all staff providing a valuable input into the self-assessment and quality improvement process.
- We will consider the complaint resolved and no further action necessary if we have had no further correspondence within 10 working days of the completion of procedure letter being issued.
- Every complaint will be considered on its own merits. ACE Training will reserve the right not to pursue a full investigation if we deem the complaint to be frivolous or vexatious.

7. References

- ACE Training Learner Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy
- Education Act 1996
- Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights

8. Appendices

- Comments and Suggestions Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Complaints Appeals Procedure
- Data Protection Complaints Procedure

Name:	Vanessa Cover	Position:	Operations Director
Signature:		Dated:	12 th March 2024
		Review Date:	March 2025

