

Policy for dealing with complaints

The UFA aims to provide an effective and efficient standard of service. We welcome comments and suggestions, both positive and negative, about the service we provide. If something goes wrong, or if a participant or organisation is dissatisfied with the service received then it is treated as a complaint. The feedback can help us to put things right and improve our services in the future.

If a participant or organisation feels we have failed to do something, done something wrong, acted unfairly or discourteously, or if they wish to offer suggestions for improvement, the following complaints procedure outlines the steps to be taken.

- Record what the complaint is about;
- when it happened;
- who was involved
- What you would like us to do to put things right.

Key Principles

1. The UFA and its Providers should be receptive to genuine expressions of dissatisfaction.
2. Complaints should be dealt with promptly, fairly and proportionately.
3. Action taken as a result of complaints should help to improve the quality of our services and training.
4. In dealing with complaints, the UFA will take account of its duty to promote equality and diversity.

The complaints process

Our standard complaints process has 3 stages.

It cannot be used to complain about the following:

- something that happened more than 6 months ago
- something you have already gone to court about
- our staff who wish to raise concerns about issues such as serious malpractice, fraudulent or dishonest practice should refer to the internal whistleblowing procedure

The complainant should be asked to provide:

- Details of their complaint
- Permission to disclose details of their complaint to the Provider/member of staff concerned.

Stage 1

Your complaint will be answered within 5 calendar days by a senior member of staff from the team you have complained about.

If you are still not satisfied you may ask that it be escalated to stage 2. You must ask for this no later than 28 days from our initial reply.

Stage 2

A senior member of staff within the same team will answer your complaint within 14 calendar days. If you are still not satisfied with the response you may ask for it to be escalated to the final stage of the complaints process. You must ask for this no later than 28 days from our initial reply.

We may invite you to meet with a member of our team and the senior officer who responded to your complaint before we investigate at stage 3.

Complaints made about members of staff are automatically entered at stage 2.

Stage 3

A senior officer will assess your complaint to decide if there should be an independent investigation. If so, we will respond within 28 calendar days. If it is decided that nothing further is to be gained from a stage 3 investigation, you will be advised of this and of the next options available to you.

UFA will investigate complaints about:

- the quality or management of programme delivery
- equality and diversity issues
- health and safety concerns (unless these are matters for the Health and Safety Executive).

We reserve the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious.

For an investigation to be fair, it needs to be thorough. This means that we need to research all the facts and give enough time to answer the allegation. Although we always aim to finalise complaints as quickly as possible.

At the end of the investigation, the investigating manager decides whether there appears to be a case to answer and whether the complaint should be raised with a senior manager to review the outcome.

The outcome of the investigation will be reported back to

- The complainant
- Those involved in the complaint
- The senior manager to review for quality and training purposes and help us improve our programmes.