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VLUK COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2021-22

1. PURPOSE

VLUK's Comments and Complaints Policy provides the structure within which learners and anyone who is dissatisfied or satisfied with the organisation can bring their comments to the attention of the organisation. The structure also assists staff to effectively deal with complaints from learners, parents, customers, employers, contractors and other interested parties. VLUK welcomes feedback to enable us to improve our services. As an organisation constantly striving to undertake continuous improvement, it also allows us to monitor and share successful practice and learn where improvements can be made to the learner journey.

Quality leaders specific to each qualification are responsible for ensuring this information is fully understood by their qualification team and by the learners who commence courses/programmes in their area.

This document is available to all colleagues on Google Drive and the company website www.vluk.org.

2. INFORMAL STAGE 1

It is recognised that some comments/concerns are raised informally, and these can and should be dealt with immediately. An immediate telephone call will occur to acknowledge comment/complaint within 24 hours. An informal comment/complaint should be raised directly with the relevant tutor or manager within 5 working days of when the incident occurred. Any such concerns should then be raised promptly and directly with the individual against whom there is a concern where relevant. We aim to resolve informal concerns quickly and effectively. If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved in this way complainants should follow VLUK's formal Complaints process as outlined below.

3. FORMAL STAGE 2

The formal procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.¹

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMPLAINANT

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, or the complainant does not wish to follow the informal complaint process, they should:

- Communicate their complaint in writing using the VLUK Learner Complaints Form to anthony.smith@vluk.org

1

All Formal Stage 2 complaints should be sent to:

The Complaints Officer
Anthony Smith
Email: anthony.smith@vluk.org

To speak to someone in person about a complaint please contact Gemma Halsey on 01793 701441

- Bring their complaint to the attention of VLUK within 2 weeks of the incident occurring.
- Explain the concern as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF VLUK

We will respond to any dissatisfaction with our services fairly and promptly;

- You will receive an initial response within 48 hours of receipt of your formal complaint
- Your complaint will be looked into and an initial response sent to you within 10 working days detailing our findings.
- A further, more detailed response will be sent on conclusion of a full investigation if relevant within a maximum of 3 weeks from the date of the complaint.
- You may be offered a meeting with the parties involved if appropriate.
- All informal and formal complaints will be logged on our central log.
- These will be retained for a period of 2 years following resolution and closure of the complaint at which point all information relating to the complaint will be deleted.

6. APPEALS AND ESCALATION PROCESS STAGE 3

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint at stage 1 and/or stage 2 you may appeal to Dominic Anderson, the Chief Operating Officer. Your appeal must be submitted within 20 working days from receipt of the complaint response. Your appeal should be sent, in writing, to

All Complaints Appeals - Stage 3 should be sent to:

COO
Dominic Anderson
Email: dominic.anderson@vluk.org

If you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, have evidence of this and remain dissatisfied, you can contact ESFA.

You can also contact ESFA if you are being prevented from exhausting our complaints procedure, or if you are no longer able to contact us because we are no longer trading.

7. HOW TO COMPLAIN TO ESFA

The ESFA only accept complaints in writing, by email or letter, except where they are required to make reasonable adjustments. Please let them know if this applies to you, either through a third party or by calling them, and they will arrange for someone to handle your complaint accordingly.

If you have difficulties in providing details in writing or if you are under 18, they will consider complaints made on your behalf by a third party. You will need to confirm that they can communicate with that third party on your behalf. If the complaint is on behalf of more than one person, they will need written permission from everyone.

You should email complaints to complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk, or put them in a letter to:

Customer Service Team,
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

When you contact the ESFA about your complaint, you will need to provide them with the following:

- the name of our organisation
- details of what your complaint is, together with the relevant documents
- evidence that you have fully exhausted our complaints procedure, including any appeals process (for example, written correspondence confirming the outcome)
- permission to disclose details of your complaint to us
- if you are acting on behalf of a learner, evidence that you have their permission to do so

The ESFA can only investigate on behalf of learners whose courses they fund or employers that they fund. They may ask you for further information to help them confirm this.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

VLUK will keep you informed of progress with your complaint and how we are handling the information provided under this Complaints Procedure. Where an investigation is required, your information may be shared with other VLUK staff members or external third parties. Before sharing your information, we will inform you of this, unless there were exceptional circumstances, for example, where doing so could pose a risk of harm to you or others. At all times complying with GDPR policy

In the case of young people under the age of 18 raising a complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint, we may be obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Complaints and comments are an important tool which, alongside other data will allow VLUK to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them.

Complaints and comments information will be considered on a regular basis by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the Board of Governors at the end of Term 2, Term 4 and a final annual report. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

Learner Complaint Form

Informal Stage 1

Before completing this form, learners are advised to follow Stage 1 of the complaints procedure and initially try to rectify the issue prior to submitting a formal complaint.

Formal Stage 2

Learners are required to complete this form and forward it to the Complaints Officer.

Name:	
Address:	
Email address:	
Contact number:	
Date complaint submitted:	
Date on course/assessment:	
Event Authorisation Number (EAN): (If applicable)	
Describe the nature of your complaint as fully as possible:	
Please attach an additional sheet if necessary.	
Signature of complainant:	Date:

Please return this form to: anthony.smith@vluke.org