



THE LINK  
— A C A D E M Y —  
ENCOURAGE | INSPIRE | ACHIEVE

**Complaints Policy and  
Procedure.**

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## Introduction:

The core values of The Link Training Academy are to provide an excellent service to all its stakeholders. From time to time we may fall short of our high standards and it is important that those affected have an effective means of bringing this to our attention with an expectation of a resolution.

The complaints policy:

- Defines what constitutes a relevant complaint
- Indicated which other policies and procedures might be more appropriate
- Set out the process for making a complaint to The Link Training Academy
- Explains the steps taken to resolve complaints
- Gives the timescale for each part of the process
- Aims to ensure that complaints are handled within a reasonable time scale and in a consistent manner
- Explains how to escalate a complaint to the relevant person.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the service we provide that is deemed to have fallen below your expectations and our own standards.

Customers who wish to complain should make sure they follow the relevant policy and procedures.

Issues relating to teaching and learning decisions should be addressed using the Appeals Policy and Procedure of The Link Academy, others may be covered by our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

Reference to other policies may be useful:

- The Whistleblowing policy
- Grievance policy for staff

Complainants who are unsure of the correct policy and procedure to follow should contact The Link Academy for advice.

Where an associated investigation identifies a rectifiable problem, The Link Academy will take all reasonable steps to:

- Identify anybody else who has been affected by the issue
- Correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate its effect as far as possible
- Take steps to ensure that the issue does not recur in the future.

Complaints should be made by the person directly affected by the matter or a person acting on their behalf with their written permission.

The Link Academy aims to deal with complaints reasonable, to the customer's satisfaction and as quickly as possible. Complaints can normally be resolved informally. If this is not achieved, a formal complaint must be raised without delay and by not later than 20 days after the occurrence of the issue which gave a rise to the complaint.

### **Scope of the Policy:**

This policy is provided for the use of:

- Learners who are attending or have attended The Link Academy
- Employers The Link Academy are engaging with or have engaged with to deliver apprenticeship training
- Personnel with responsibilities for administration, managing, delivering, assessing and quality assuring our programmes
- Members of the public accessing our services

Who wish to make a complaint in relation to the services we offer.

### Responsibilities

The Link Academy staff are required to follow the related procedures in order to deal with complaints as transparently, consistently and effectively as possible.

All staff must be fully aware of the policy and conversant with the related procedures.

### Confidentiality and data protection

In following this process an individual might provide us with confidential information and during our investigation we may need to request information of a confident nature. Complainants are assured that The Link Academy complies fully with data protection legislation at all stages. We ensure that confidential information is kept securely and used only for the purpose for which it is intended.

### Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints cannot be considered. The Link Academy will note the contents and may seek to verify them if this is possible and appropriate. We may include related information in our review activities.

### Review arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually as part of The Link Academy's self-assessment process which includes consideration of customer and regulatory feedback and good practice guidance. A policy review may also be triggered as an action resulting from the outcome of the investigation of a complaint.

### **Process for making a complaint:**

#### Introduction

There are two stages to making a complaint:

1. Stage 1: making an informal complaint
2. Stage 2: making a formal complaint

#### Stage 1: Informal

- The complainant raises their complaint informally by email or telephone with the member of staff responsible for the related issue
- The member of staff aims to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction and communicate this to the complainant within 7 working days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, they may ask for the complaint to be referred to the director of The Link Academy.
- The director will aim to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction and communicate this to the complainant within 7 working days.

#### Stage 2: formal

- If the matter has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the formal complaints policy may be triggered by completing and submitting the complaint in written form, either via email or letter within 2 weeks of the informal complaint taking place
- Information should include the details and circumstances and facts surrounding the complaint
- Copies of any correspondence regarding the complaint
- All material relevant to the complaint
- Any other supporting documents relevant to the complaint
- An outline of the reason for dissatisfaction with the member of staff's decision from stage 1.

If at any point the complainant or other involved in the complaint wish to be legally represented in relation to any aspect of the complaint, The Link Academy also reserves the right to be legally represented and to act upon legal advice.

Upon receipt of the completed complaint documentation, The Link Academy will:

- Acknowledge receipt and log the complaint within 3 working days

- Allocate the complaint to a member of the team who has no involvement in the related issue
- Investigate the complaint and contact you if we wish to seek further information or a meeting at this stage
- Provide a decision to the complainant within 14 working days of receipt, outlining proposed remedial action. In complex cases, the timescale may be extended. We will let you know in this case.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision at this stage you may ask for it to be reviewed by the Director or a contract manager.

If the complaint does not involve contractual compliance with ESFA, Ofsted, HSE or ICO, the Directors decision is final.

If any part of the complaint is upheld The Link Academy will:

- Consider the implications for the improvement of services and procedures and agree actions
- Advise the complainant of proposed remedial actions

Remedial actions will be proportional to the matter under consideration and may include:

- An apology, eg for poor service
- An explanation of how the matter will be ameliorated
- Review of and improvements to policies and procedures
- Staff training and development

Complainants who remain dissatisfied may wish to take their case to the relevant regulator. Our regulators are:

- ESFA
- Ofsted
- HSE
- ICO
- Awarding Organisations
- End Point Assessment Organisations