



Inspiring Great British Manufacturing

Complaints Policy

Policy owner: Quality Enhancement, Compliance and Systems Manager

Date policy approved: 1 February 2022 (appointment of new managing director)

Policy approved by: David Grailey

Job Title: Managing Director – MTC Training

Signature: 

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1 Policy Statement

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction of the services provided by MTC Training.

MTC Training is committed to meeting and exceeding our customer care standards and providing high quality products and service. We welcome your comments, suggestions and feedback on the service you have experienced when using any of our products or services.

This policy, and the associated procedures and processes, are the mechanism for customers to raise concerns or complaints about the service delivered by MTC Training or partner organisations. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay, whilst ensuring a full and fair assessment of the particular circumstances of an individual complaint. It also aims to ensure that, where practical, lessons can be learnt and improvements made to the service that MTC Training offers.

This procedure covers areas of MTC Training activity where an individual or group has a complaint arising from their apprenticeship experience. The Policy should not be used where an issue is covered by any of the following policies:

- Appeals Process
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Initiating this complaints procedure should be seen as a last resort in the search for a solution to a problem. Before using the Complaints Procedure, each individual should normally raise the issue with his or her line or Line Manager, or in the case of apprentices and/or parents/guardians, with the MTC Training Programme Manager, if possible. This can be done in person, by telephone, or by email.

The following policy, procedure and process applies to any of our customers; these can be applicants, apprentices, employers and parents/guardians.

2 Promotion

This policy and associated procedures, guidance and documentation together with the individual and collective obligations contained within it, are promoted to all MTC Training colleagues, apprentices and apprentice employers on an ongoing basis.

As an integral element of the onboarding and induction process for all MTC Training colleagues, and apprentices are issued with a copy of the policy and taken through the policy to ensure they understand the policy and associated procedures, guidance and documentation.

Each MTC Training colleague and apprentice signs a declaration that they have received a copy of the policy, that they understand their obligations under the policy and that they agree to abide by their obligations.

External employers who use MTC Training to train their apprentices are made aware of this policy and associated procedures, guidance and documentation, including any specific obligations that they and their apprentice need to meet. The external employer signs a declaration stating that they understand their obligations under the policy and that they agree to abide by their obligations.

This policy is also available on the MTC Training website for external visitors to review and download.

3 Operating Principles

MTC Training acknowledges that there are two sides to every dispute. The procedure intends to provide both parties with the opportunity to provide evidence to substantiate their version of the issue / incident. Full disclosure of any allegations or evidence will be made to both parties.

Where issues cannot be resolved informally as described above, they become a complaint and the MTC Training Quality Enhancement, Compliance and Systems Manager (hereafter referred to as the Quality Manager) will consider the evidence of the complaint. The MTC Training Quality Manager will be from outside the area of the complaint and will have had no previous involvement in the issue or concern. If the Quality Enhancement, Compliance and Systems Manager is the subject of the complaint, then a Delivery Manager will take on the Quality Manager role in resolving the complaint.

All information supplied by customers will remain confidential for use within the complaints process. Only colleagues directly involved with the complaint / investigation / resolution will be given access to the facts of the case.

Complaints provide an important source of feedback on the performance of services provided by MTC Training.

MTC Training monitors the registration of each complaint and the progress towards reaching a satisfactory resolution.

Complaints will be monitored to ensure they are dealt with promptly and efficiently. MTC Training will not reveal the identification of any complainant. However, anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

Customers can normally expect to receive a written or verbal acknowledgement of their complaint within 2 working days from MTC Training.

Any party involved in a complaint has the right to be accompanied and represented by a person of his or her choice at every relevant stage of the procedure.

MTC Training colleagues have the right to be accompanied by their immediate line manager or a colleague.

All colleagues that are dealing with complaints shall, where appropriate, seek guidance and advice from internal / external sources in order to resolve a complaint. The identity of all parties will be protected, wherever possible.

4 Informal Complaints Procedure (Route 1)

Many issues can be dealt with at a local level and where possible it is often best to do so to ensure a speedy resolution. These matters may be handled by any colleague, but support from a line manager may be sought.

The MTC Training colleague will attempt to resolve the issue by exploring the complaint and relaying the outcome back to the complainant. They will inform the Line Manager, who will complete a Cause for Concern Form (APP-013-F1). This is sent to the Quality Manager, who will record the complaint and the outcome in the Informal Complaints Log.

All informal complaints will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the Quality Team, who will identify any emerging themes or procedures/systems that require review through our continuous improvement approach and Quality Assurance process.

All informal complaints shall be dealt with within 10 working days of the alleged incident, matter or concern. To support any allegation that is made, the complainant shall provide evidence. Where supportive evidence is not provided, MTC Training reserves the right not to progress with the complaint to the formal stage of the procedure.

Where, in the complainant's opinion, the matter is too sensitive, personal or confidential to discuss with the Assessor or their immediate Line Manager, the issue(s) can, in the first instance, be presented directly to the Quality Manager.

Most complaints do not progress beyond this initial route. However, if the matter is not resolved within the Route 1 period of 10 working days, if a complainant is still unhappy with the outcome, or a further complaint is received, the Formal Complaint Procedure (Route 2) can be evoked.

5 Formal Complaints Procedure (Route 2)

A formal complaint is normally appropriate when initial resolution attempts have failed (see above) or the situation is deemed to be serious.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, or it is not appropriate to do so due to the nature of the complaint, the matter will be treated as a formal complaint. The complaint (and any accompanying evidence) should be transferred immediately to the Quality Manager who will log the complaint.

A complaint will not normally be considered if submitted more than three months after the issue or event occurred, unless there was good reason why it could not have been raised sooner.

Learner rights are not affected by making a formal complaint. We are unable to take action on anonymous complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Complaints found to be of a false nature may result in disciplinary action.

The Quality Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant within 2 working days from the date of receipt.

Timing guidelines for the handling of a formal complaint start on the day of acknowledgement from the Quality Manager. The day of acknowledgement of the complaint will be day zero.

An Investigating Officer will be appointed by the Quality Manager. This would normally be a manager with direct involvement in the area of the complaint. This ensures that an individual with suitable knowledge and experience is handling the investigation.

There may be instances where it is inappropriate or impractical to involve a manager from within the area as the Investigating Officer. In this case, the Quality Manager will decide on an alternative person to act as the Investigating Officer.

The Investigating Officer will aim to conclude their investigation within 10 working days of receipt from the Quality Manager, and send a draft response letter to the Quality Manager for approval. The Investigating Officer will also confirm if in their view the complaint was upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

The Quality Manager will send the final response to the complainant within 10 working days of acknowledgement of the original complaint and close the complaint. However deadlines may be extended to take into account the availability of relevant colleagues. If there is a delay in producing a final written response, the Quality Manager will send an update letter to the complainant within 10 working days of acknowledgement of the complaint, informing the complainant of the reason for the delay. The Quality Manager will also escalate the complaint to the Deputy Director – Delivery. The Investigating Officer will produce a final written response within 10 working days of the date of this update letter, or within the time period advised within the update letter if a longer investigation is required.

Copies of all correspondence with the complainant and an Investigation Summary should be sent to the Quality Team for safe, confidential storage.

Should the complaint being made be against the actions of the Quality Manager, a Delivery Manager will take responsibility for the Quality Manager responsibilities in the above procedure.

6 Appeal

If a customer feels that the procedures have not been followed or a decision is unreasonable, they have the right to appeal to the Deputy Director – Delivery within 21 days of the announcement of the decision (unless the complaint is against the Quality Manager, then a Delivery Manager would be notified).

The grounds for the appeal should be clearly stated and evidenced in writing, and any supporting papers should be included with the submission at this stage.

The appeal will not consider new evidence, including witnesses, at this stage.

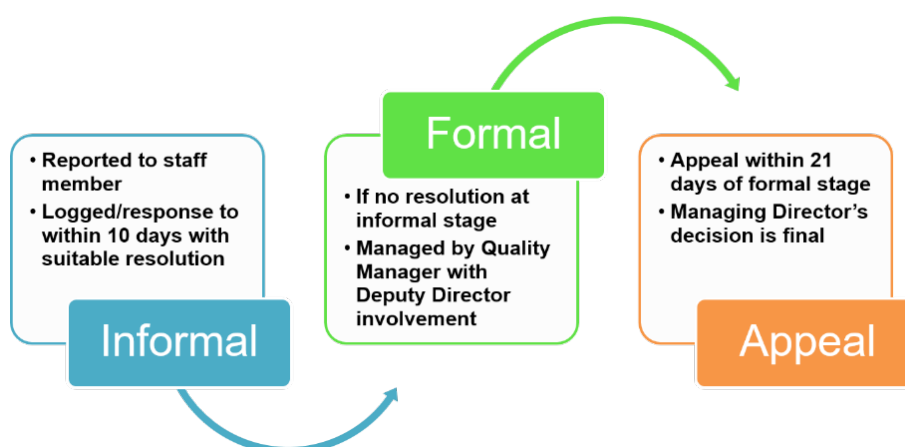
In the event that new evidence, including witnesses, has come to light that was not available at the first hearing, then the first hearing / investigation will be reconvened for the original Investigating Officer to consider the implications and effects of the new evidence.

The documentation will be submitted to the MTC Training Managing Director who will decide if the appeal can be considered on the paper evidence submitted or if a hearing is required.

If it is deemed appropriate by the MTC Training Managing Director, an appeal hearing may be convened with the MTC Training Managing Director in the Chair. The Deputy Director – Delivery will support this function. The complainant and appropriate respondent will be required to attend any hearing convened under this appeal stage.

Where an appeal hearing is deemed appropriate, it should normally be held within 21 working days of the request being made. Notes, not verbatim minutes, of the hearing will be taken and made available to the complainant.

The MTC Training Managing Director's decision will be final.



7 Continuing a complaint beyond MTC Training's Complaints Process

If the complainant has exhausted the MTC Training complaints process, and if a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved, the complainant has a right to complain to MTC Training's regulatory body. For the purposes of this policy, MTC Training is regulated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and as such, complaints should be addressed to the Customer Service Team at the ESFA.

Complainants should note that the ESFA will only take up a complaint when they are satisfied that the MTC Training procedure, including appeal, has been exhausted, unless the ESFA believes that MTC Training is not dealing with a complaint appropriately or effectively, when it may intervene before the procedure is exhausted.

Details on the ESFA complaints procedure are contained in the document entitled "Complaints about post 16 education and training provision funded by ESFA" which is available from the ESFA. An online version of this document is available to download here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>

8 Key Ethics

MTC Training shall take into account its duty to promote equality and diversity throughout this process.

MTC Training shall endeavour to deal with all complaints informally in the first instance, aiming for a quick and satisfactory resolution.

All information that customers provide will be treated fairly and in the strictest confidence in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any information relating to a third party will also be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Act. The information provided will only be used for dealing with complaints and for monitoring.

All complaints that are submitted to MTC Training will be dealt with in accordance with this procedure.

Once a complaint has been received, MTC Training will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the customer's complaint by telephone or in writing
- Tell the customer who will be dealing with their complaint
- Tell the customer what action will be taken
- Tell the customer when they can expect a resolution
- Keep the customer informed of the advances being made with their case

The Deputy Director – Delivery holds overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.

9 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Quality Manager to assess its implementation and effectiveness. This is in line with statutory requirements.

10 Access to policy documentation, advice and support

This Complaints Policy is made available to all delivery colleagues on the MTC's Business Management System (BMS), and is made available to the apprentices, parents / guardians, employers and the general public via MTC Training's websites.

11 Policy Endorsement

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout MTC Training without exception.