



# COMPLAINTS

## Purpose

First For Apprenticeships are committed to providing a client focused, consistent, credible and continuously improving portfolio of services and as such are committed to listening and responding to our clients, associates and partners to continually improve the service we provide and are committed to giving all of those we deal with the opportunity to express satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, with our service, policies, processes and procedures, and to improving those policies, systems and procedures where appropriate in order to improve our service.

## Definitions

What is a “complaint”? – A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service or person that requires further investigation.

Where a contract exists between First For Apprenticeships and another party, the terms of the contract will apply following the informal stage. Complaints should be handled in a professional non-confrontational manner.

## Informal Approach

Talk through the issue with the appropriate member of staff to find an informal way to resolve the problem, within 10 working days of the action or loss of service that you feel has adversely impacted on you.

- Appropriate members of staff:
  - Quality Manager
  - Internal Verifier
  - Trainer/Assessor
  - Examinations and Administration Administrator
  - Commercial Manager – for employer complaints

All complaints are to be escalated to the Quality Manager who takes the responsibility to ensure the informal complaint has been acted upon within 3 working days and all responses are documented and kept on file to conclude the agreed outcome to satisfy the complaint.



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## Formal Approach

- If the informal approach does not resolve the matter, you may make a formal complaint, which should be in writing within 10 working days of the grievance to the Quality Manager (a template is included within this policy to use, if desired). If the informal approach has not been executed, First For Apprenticeships reserves the right to instigate this and treat your complaint informally in the first instance. Assistance regarding how to make a complaint can be gained through the Quality Manager
- The Quality Manager and/or the Director will take the role as the investigating manager for the complaint.

## On Receipt of a Formal, Written Complaint

Within 3 working days: The Quality Manager will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint to the complainant (and forward a copy to the assigned investigating manager.)

Within 10 working days: The investigator will conclude the investigation and a response to the complaint. If it is not possible to conclude within 10 days, the investigator will send the complainant an indication of how the complaint is being addressed and when they will receive a detailed response.

All copies of correspondence between parties relating to the complaint should be forwarded to the Quality Manager to file within the complaints record.

## Appeal Against The Outcome Of A Formal Written Complaint

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint they have the right to appeal against the conclusion. If they wish to do this they should write to the Director stating that they are dissatisfied with the outcome, outlining the reasons for the appeal and what they will consider as an alternative outcome. This should be done in writing within 30 days from the date of the formal written response being received.
  - The Director will then review the complaint, including any investigation to date.
  - The Director may also wish to carry out further investigations on the complainant's behalf. In any event, they will seek to resolve the issues involved and issue a written response within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal letter.



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## Taking A Complaint Further

If, when the internal formal complaints procedure has been exhausted, the complainant remains dissatisfied they may have grounds to complain to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA):

ESFA Complaints  
Chief Executive's Office  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

## Time Periods

The time periods as set out in this procedure are for guidance and may be subject to extension. Where any such extensions are made, they will be notified to the complainant in writing.

## Monitoring And Reporting

The Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring that adequate records are maintained of any received complaints and actions taken to enable conclusion and compile a report to include areas for improvement to submit to the Director.

## Contact Details

First for Apprenticeships Limited,  
Tanfield Lea Business Centre,  
Tanfield Lea North Industrial Estate,  
Stanley,  
DH9 9BD

Tel: 07549513184  
Email: [info@ffapps.co.uk](mailto:info@ffapps.co.uk)



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## Formal Complaint

Please complete this form and return to the Quality Assurance Manager.

### Stage One

Have you talked through the issue with a member of staff?

If “yes”, and you are not satisfied with the outcome, then complete this form (if you need support, then please ask a member of staff).

If “no”, then please talk through the issue with a member of staff first. We would hope to resolve your issue at this point.

### Stage Two

**Name of person complaining:**

**Date:**

1. What is the reason for the complaint? What is the action or loss of service that has adversely impacted on you?
2. When did this happen
3. Who was involved?
4. What do you hope the outcome will be?

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_