Complaints Procedure

SCOPE

This policy is designed to provide learners (apprentices and/or delegates) visitors and employers & employees? , the process to raise a complaint with confidence that it will be treated appropriately, and timely to bring matters to a resolution.

A complaint can be made about behaviour or actions carried out by a PETA employee, or a learner, or an associated employer, visitor or contractor, which causes significant disadvantage, or offence. The aim of any complaint should be to stop the offending behaviour, to secure appropriate and fair redress and to learn how things might be done better in the future, as complaints can teach us ways to improve.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

The most satisfactory way to resolve a complaint is often by direct discussion between the person who feels aggrieved and the person who seems to have given offence or acted contrary to our stated policy and procedures, and/or governing regulations related to the provision of services. To be effective in achieving a resolution, discussions should be:

- Calm, with no raised voices or inflammatory language
- Specific, with the grounds for complaint clearly stated and referring to the appropriate PETA policy wherever possible
- Non-confrontational; it may be that the offence, whilst real, was unintentional and a simple apology would suffice to lay matters to rest
- Constructive, seeking ways to avoid future difficulties

The presence of a third person who is neutral in the dispute may help in its resolution. Where a complaint concerns a serious matter, for example, anti-social behaviour, harassment and/or discrimination, bullying, radicalisation, victimisation or fraudulent activity by a PETA employee against a learner, these should always be dealt with formally through the Grievance and/or Disciplinary process and our Safeguarding Policy and procedure.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Even though the procedure is formal and may result in serious action against an offender if upheld, formal complaints will be dealt with in a sympathetic way, respecting the dignity of all concerned. The procedure for addressing a formal complaint is as follows:

- Complaint should be documented, detailing the scope of complaint, associated timelines and, where possible, proposed resolution. An IMS Advice Note must be raised in support of the complaint enabling full investigation and resolution to take place. Feedback should be provided to all involved in the complaint verbally and/or in writing.
- If the complaint relates to safeguarding including prevent, this will be managed in line with the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Code of Conduct.
- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing/email, and investigation commenced within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- The representative of PETA will recommend any further action thought necessary related to the complaint including, where appropriate, reference to an apprentice's and/or delegate's employer.
- Integral to our quality management systems, is the monitoring of complaints and analysis of trends, to enable future practice to be improved, be this process behavioural. A trends analysis of complaints is formally review by the Senior Leadership Team at the IMS Quarterly Review meetings.

- In the event an individual is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, they can escalate the complaint to Chief Executive Officer in the first instance and if necessary, the Chair of the Trustees of PETA (the Board). The decision of the Board is final*.

*If an apprentice is unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they have the right to escalate the matter directly to the Department of Education by accessing the Customer Help Portal

Where a complaint relates to the administration of qualifications or certifications, the individual complaining has the right to contact the relevant regulatory/certification organisation as appropriate. This will include in the administration of certificated programmes and exams, including End Point Assessment activities.

OFQUAL REGULATED QUALIFICATIONS ONLY

In most instances, if you have a concern or complaint, PETA or the awarding organisation will apply their documented process to investigate and respond to that complaint, and you must always follow that process first.

However, if you are not satisfied the complaint has been handled appropriately, and wish to escalate a concern (whistleblowing), or report malpractice about an exam board, awarding organisation or qualification **regulated by Ofqual*** then please go to the following site for guidance:

Ofqual complaints

*This site contains a search function to help you establish ***if*** your qualification is regulated by **Ofqual** and gives you guidance on what to do to raise your complaint.