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5.0	Complaints Policy (Apprenticeships)	01/08/2026
PLANNED REVIEW:	**PREPARED BY:**	**PLANNED REVIEW DATE:**
Annual	Andy Murphy, CEO	01/08/2027

Introduction

This policy and procedure has been developed to support PEAK's values to provide an excellent, open, honest and transparent service for all customers. Its purpose is the recognition that all users of the company's services have a right to raise complaints and to have problems investigated and appropriately acted upon.

Commitment

PEAK welcomes and encourages feedback from apprentices, learners, employers and other stakeholders to enable continuous improvement of our services. Where complaints occur, PEAK makes every effort to resolve them quickly and at the most appropriate level.

It is our aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- All complaints are treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- We will respond to your complaint informing you of what action we have taken.
- We learn from complaints and feedback and we use them to improve our service.

Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all complaints from enrolled apprentices/learners, and those applying for courses, parents/carers of learners under 18, employers and other users of PEAK's services and facilities.

Any expressed dissatisfaction with the following will be treated as a complaint:

- Failure by PEAK to meet obligations including those outlined in the apprentice/learner or employer contract and apprentice/learner handbooks.
- Concerns about the delivery of a course, apprenticeship, quality of teaching, administration, Information Advice and Guidance or any other service provided by PEAK.
- The quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by PEAK.
- Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing services on behalf of PEAK.

The Policy does not cover complaints about assessment which is covered by the Appeals procedure.

Staff complaints will be resolved using the PEAK Staff Grievance Procedures.

Complaints which are deemed to fall into any of the categories listed below will not be considered under the scope of this policy and procedure.

- Anonymous
- Already been investigated and resolved.
- Outside the scope of the procedure.
- Made without adequate grounds.
- Made outside the time limit.
- Been disposed of in court or tribunal proceedings brought by the complainant or under settlement agreement between the complainants.
- Are malicious, vexatious or frivolous.

If an apprentice/learner is found to have made a malicious complaint, this could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis and close to their point of origin.

Except in exceptional circumstances, we will try to ensure that your complaint remains confidential, but in some cases the circumstances may need to be discussed with other parties therefore it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. In these situations we will discuss this with the complainant.

Location of the policy

This policy is available for all staff members, employers and apprentices/learners to access on Bud, Online Portfolio, the PEAK website () (where it can be accessed by parents and carers) and is shared during induction.https://www.peakapprenticeships.co.uk/apprenticeships

Communication of the policy

It is important that staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications, employers and apprentices/learners undertaking these qualifications, are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

Legal Framework

The Department for Education (DfE) and Skills England require training providers to have a complaints procedure. The Complaints Policy and Procedure also supports PEAK's policy on Equality and Diversity, The Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism, Safeguarding and Whistleblowing and Acceptable use of IT.

Principles

Whenever possible any concerns will be dealt with as soon as any member of staff is made aware of them. Many concerns can be dealt with informally by contacting our main office and email info@peakapprenticeships.co.uk. If you are not satisfied with the response or feel your concern requires a more official or formal response, please follow our process as defined within this policy.

PEAK will only respond to formal complaints that have been raised within three months of the occurrence of the complaint.

A formal complaint will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt by the Training Manager.

Gemma Nicholson will act as the company's Complaints Officer and maintain a full record of complaints received and their outcome.

Following the investigation, a response will be sent to the complainant within 7 working days. Where more time is needed e.g. the complaint is complex and prevents the completion of the investigation, the complainant will be sent an interim letter outlining progress with the investigation and giving a date for the full response.

Responses to complaints will include details on appeals. Valid appeals will usually be investigated and responded to within 20 working days.

Although staff cannot make a complaint on behalf of an apprentice/learner, they will assist in recording a complaint. Staff will, on request, provide support for enrolled apprentices/learners in presenting a complaint.

PEAK Responsibility

All staff are responsible for ensuring that complaints are dealt with in a supportive, courteous and timely manner.

Complaints will usually be investigated by the manager responsible for the provision, service, procedure or facility about which the complaint is made.

A complainant has the right of appeal against the response to his/her complaint.

Gemma Nicholson will investigate and respond to valid appeals by the complainant.

Complainant Responsibility

Complainants are expected to bring their complaint to PEAK's attention detailing the reasons for the complaint occurring.

To facilitate the investigation the complainant should explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible (such as including names, times, dates) and include any action taken to date.

Complainants must recognise that some circumstances are beyond the control of PEAK which will impact on the final outcome of any complaint.

The Procedure

Stage 1 (Informal)

The complainant should raise their concerns with the member of staff who has direct responsibility for the matter in question to try to achieve a satisfactory resolution. If they are unable to do this then we have a complaints officer, Gemma Nicholson, who can be contacted directly by email gemma@peakapprenticeships.co.uk they will pass the information on to a relevant manager who will try and satisfactorily resolve the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the response or feel your concern requires a more official or formal response, please follow our process as defined within this policy.

Managers dealing with complaints must complete the Complaints Record Form and ensure that this is recorded on the shared secure drive and the complaints log within 24 hours of dealing with the complaint.

If the complainant does not feel that their concerns have been addressed by the member of staff who has direct responsibility for the matter in question, then they should make a formal complaint to the company's Complaints Officer.

The complaint may involve the Manager, in such cases it is reasonable to pass the complaint directly to the Complaints Officer.

Stage 2 (Formal)

Formal complaints must be issued in writing by sending it to:

Complaints Officer

PEAK,

NE-BIC, Enterprise Park East, Wearfield, Sunderland SR5 2TA.

On receipt of a formal complaint, the Complaints Officer will log the complaint using the Complaints Report Log and acknowledge its receipt within 24 hours.

If the company receives a formal complaint in writing, they must add the date when it was received before passing the communication immediately to the Complaints Officer who will log it and acknowledge its receipt to the complainant.

The Complaints Officer will either fully investigate the complaint themselves or appoint an appropriate investigating manager who will conduct a full investigation, and this will normally be the relevant manager. However, if that person has already had some involvement with the issue, the Complaints Officer will conduct the investigation or assign another manager.

Within 7 working days of receiving a complaint from the Complaints Officer, the investigating manager will provide the Complaints Officer with the results of the investigation and a signed letter of reply for the complainant, detailing the outcome and actions arising from the investigation.

In highly exceptional cases where the investigating manager is unable to meet the above timescale, the investigating manager will inform the Complaints Officer, who, in turn, will communicate this to the complainant.

The Complaints Officer will advise the Managing Director of any investigations where a complaint has not been fully resolved.

Appeals

The complainant has the right of appeal against the response to his/her complaint. The appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds

- That there is additional evidence that could not have been made available at the time the original complaint was considered
- Proper procedure was not followed.

Appeals Procedure

The complainant should make their appeal in writing to the Managing Director within 15 days of the date of the letter outlining the outcomes of the investigation. The letter of appeal should clearly state the grounds of appeal (see above). Any appeals which do not include this information will not be considered.

The Managing Director will review the investigation and provide a written response to the complainant usually within 20 working days.

If the appeal is upheld, PEAK will apologise and make clear the actions taken to address the issue. If the appeal is not upheld, the response will detail the findings of the appeal process.

Both the appeal and the response will be copied to the Complaints Officer.

In exceptional circumstances, the Managing Director will convene a panel. This would only occur where significant new evidence has been received.

The appeal panel will consist of a member of the Senior Management Team and another Manager or IAB Member.

The Managing Director agrees a date for the appeal hearing and confirms the details in writing to the complainant. The appeal panel meeting is usually arranged within 20 working days of the receipt of the grounds for appeal.

The complainant will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend or a representative (who may not be a practising solicitor or barrister).

The appeal panel considers the matters identified in the grounds for appeal and may uphold, amend or overturn the original decision of the company.

The record of the decision of the appeal panel will be provided within 10 working days of the panel meeting.

There is no further right of appeal within PEAK's procedures. Complainants can contact the relevant external funding agency, such as the DfE, Skills England or Awarding Organisations if they feel PEAK has not dealt with the complaint according to this procedure.

Monitoring

An annual report will provide an analysis of complaints and the action which PEAK has taken as a result of them.

The monitoring process will be used to ensure that all complainants are treated fairly and equally.

Where available PEAK will collect and analyse anonymised data on complainants to identify differences between groups and to allow issues to be identified and practice addressed: Age, Gender, Ethnic Origin, Disability, Medical, Health, and this will be identified through the Central Records Management System.

Breach of the Policy

PEAK will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the policy by its staff. Where appropriate, instances may be referred to the Company's disciplinary procedure.