



The Link Training Academy

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Version: V1 2026-2027

Policy Owner: Directors

Approved By: Board of Governors

Review Date: August 2027

1. Policy Statement

The Link Training is committed to providing high-quality training, assessment and support services for learners, apprentices, employers and other stakeholders.

We recognise that, despite our commitment to excellence, occasions may arise where an individual is dissatisfied with a service we have provided.

We welcome complaints as an opportunity to:

- Improve our services;
- Learn from feedback;
- Resolve concerns promptly and fairly;
- Strengthen relationships with learners, employers and stakeholders;
- Ensure continuous quality improvement.

No individual will be treated unfavourably for making a genuine complaint.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a clear process for raising concerns and complaints.
 - Ensure complaints are handled fairly, consistently and promptly.
 - Promote transparency and accountability.
 - Support continuous improvement.
 - Ensure complaints are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
 - Identify learning and improvement opportunities from complaint outcomes.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by:

- Current learners;
- Former learners;
- Apprentices;
- Employers;
- Parents or carers of learners under 18 where appropriate;
- Staff acting as learners;
- Members of the public;
- Contractors and stakeholders.

Complaints may relate to:

- Quality of teaching, learning or assessment;
 - Programme administration;
 - Apprenticeship delivery;
 - Communication and customer service;
 - Workplace learning arrangements;
 - Learning resources;
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion matters;
 - Staff conduct;
 - Employer engagement;
 - Facilities and venues used for training;
 - Any service delivered by The Link Training.
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4. Matters Not Covered by this Policy

The following should be addressed through separate procedures:

Issue	Relevant Policy
Safeguarding concerns	Safeguarding Policy

Bullying and harassment	Bullying, Harassment and Respectful Behaviour Policy
Assessment decisions	Appeals Policy
Malpractice or maladministration	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
Staff employment matters	Grievance Policy
Public interest concerns	Whistleblowing Policy

Where a complaint raises safeguarding concerns, The Link Training reserves the right to immediately refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Safeguarding matters may be investigated separately from the complaints process.

Where a complaint includes concerns regarding assessment decisions, the assessment element may be managed through the Appeals Policy whilst other aspects continue through the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

5. Principles

The Link Training is committed to ensuring complaints are:

- Taken seriously;
- Investigated impartially;
- Managed confidentially where possible;
- Resolved promptly;
- Recorded appropriately;
- Used to improve services.

Complainants can expect to be:

- Treated fairly and respectfully;
- Kept informed of progress;
- Given an explanation of decisions;
- Advised of available escalation routes.

6. Equality, Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

The Link Training is committed to ensuring all individuals can access the complaints process.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Alternative formats;
- Additional support with written submissions;
- Telephone or online meetings;
- Support from an advocate;

- Extended timescales where appropriate.

No individual will experience discrimination for raising a complaint.

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information relating to complaints will be:

- Held securely;
- Shared only with those who need to know;
- Processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- Safeguarding concerns exist;
 - Criminal activity is alleged;
 - Regulatory reporting is required;
 - Disclosure is required by law.
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8. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated.

However, The Link Training may investigate anonymous concerns where information provided suggests:

- A safeguarding risk;
- Malpractice or fraud;
- Discrimination;
- Harassment;
- Significant organisational risk.

Individuals wishing to raise concerns anonymously may also refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff

All staff must:

- Treat complaints seriously;
- Attempt early resolution where appropriate;

- Maintain professionalism;
- Escalate concerns when necessary;
- Cooperate with investigations.

Managers

Managers must:

- Investigate complaints fairly;
- Ensure timescales are met;
- Maintain records;
- Identify improvement actions.

Directors and Governors

The Directors and Governors will:

- Review complaints at final stage;
 - Oversee complaint trends;
 - Monitor improvement actions;
 - Ensure policy compliance.
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10. Time Limits

Complaints should normally be raised within:

Three months of the event giving rise to the complaint.

Complaints received outside this period may still be considered where:

- There is a reasonable explanation for delay;
 - Relevant evidence remains available;
 - Investigation remains practical.
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11. Complaint Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

The complainant should raise concerns with:

- Their tutor;

- Assessor;
- Programme lead;
- Relevant staff member.

Complaints may be made:

- In person;
- By telephone;
- By email;
- During review meetings;
- Through online meetings.

Outcome

The Link Training will aim to:

- Investigate the concern;
- Agree a solution;
- Respond within **seven working days**.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may progress to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing by email or letter.

The complaint should include:

- Name and contact details;
- Description of the complaint;
- Relevant dates;
- Individuals involved;
- Evidence available;
- Actions already taken;
- Desired outcome.

Acknowledgement

The Link Training will:

- Acknowledge receipt within **three working days**;
- Log the complaint;
- Allocate the investigation to a manager not previously involved.

Investigation

The investigator may:

- Review documentation;
- Meet with relevant individuals;
- Request further evidence;
- Consider policies and procedures.

Outcome

A written response will normally be issued within **14 working days**.

Where a complaint is particularly complex, timescales may be extended. The complainant will be informed of the reason and expected completion date.

Stage 3: Review

If dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may request a review within **10 working days** of receiving the formal response.

The review should explain:

- Why the decision is disputed;
- Any relevant additional evidence;
- The desired outcome.

The Director, or another appropriately independent senior representative, will review:

- The investigation process;
- Available evidence;
- The decision reached.

A final response will normally be issued within **14 working days**.

The decision at this stage is final within The Link Training's internal procedures.

12. Possible Outcomes

Following investigation, outcomes may include:

- No further action;
- Clarification or explanation;
- Formal apology;
- Service improvement;

- Policy review;
- Staff training;
- Additional learner support;
- Corrective action;
- Referral to another procedure.

Any action taken will be proportionate to the complaint.

13. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Link Training expects all parties to behave respectfully during the complaints process.

The organisation reserves the right to manage communications where an individual:

- Uses abusive language;
- Makes discriminatory remarks;
- Acts aggressively;
- Submits repetitive complaints without new evidence.

Where necessary, communication may be limited to written correspondence.

14. Safeguarding Concerns

Where a complaint identifies:

- Abuse;
- Neglect;
- Exploitation;
- Bullying;
- Harassment;
- Hate incidents;
- Radicalisation concerns;
- Significant welfare concerns;

The matter will immediately be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding concerns may take priority over the complaints process.

Emergency situations should be reported to emergency services by calling 999.

15. Record Keeping and Monitoring

The Link Training will maintain a central register of complaints including:

- Date received;
- Nature of complaint;
- Investigation undertaken;
- Outcome;
- Improvement actions identified.

Complaint trends, themes and lessons learned, will be reviewed annually as part of:

- Self-assessment;
 - Quality improvement planning;
 - Organisational risk management processes.
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16. External Escalation

Where applicable, complainants may contact relevant external organisations after exhausting The Link Training's internal procedures.

These may include:

- Department for Education (DfE)
- Ofsted
- Awarding Organisations
- End-Point Assessment Organisations
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The Link Training will provide contact information where appropriate.

17. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
 - Bullying, Harassment and Respectful Behaviour Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Appeals Policy
 - Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Learner Code of Conduct
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Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- Legislation changes;
- Regulatory requirements change;
- Significant complaints identify a need for review;
- Organisational changes occur.

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