

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd (VTS) is committed to providing a high-quality apprenticeship delivery service throughout Essex and into the surrounding counties.

We aim to provide our customers (employers, learners and visitors) with the best possible service in all areas of our operations. From time to time, we understand that our customers may feel our service has fallen short of expected standards and may wish to tell us about it. This is what we refer to as a complaint and if it happens, we undertake to deal with all such matters promptly and fairly, in accordance with our published procedure. Furthermore, we will maintain a complaints log in order that we are able to analyse the nature of complaints, compile meaningful data and use this to continually improve our services.

This policy is intended for customer complaints regarding the quality of our services. Matters relating to learners who are not happy with assessment or verification decisions are dealt with under our Appeals Procedure.

We expect minor grievances and day to day issues to be resolved promptly and verbally between the complainant and the relevant VTS staff member, or perhaps by involving VTS management on an informal basis. However, for complaints of a more serious nature which cannot be resolved in this way, the complaints procedure will be followed.

In following our published procedure, we pledge to:

- Give our customers a straightforward process to follow
- Assure our customers of our best attention in dealing with their grievance
- Ensure that we investigate all complaints promptly, thoroughly, fairly and respecting confidentiality
- Arrive at a resolution which is satisfactory to both parties
- Keep customers informed at every stage of the process
- Deal with all complaints in accordance with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy
- Maintain a comprehensive log of complaints data
- Use complaints data to improve our services going forward
- Retain complaints data in accordance with GDPR compliance & our Privacy Policy

Responsibility & Authority for upholding the policy & procedure

Responsibility lies with all VTS staff members in terms of providing our services to the high standard we expect. Staff should be aware of minor grievances emerging and deal with them promptly, referring to senior management as necessary, in order to avoid escalation. In spite of best efforts, if a customer informs a staff member that they wish to make a complaint, that staff member will immediately signpost the customer to our complaints procedure and inform senior management accordingly.

The Director, Emma Henigan has ultimate responsibility and authority for the management, implementation, review and updating of the Complaints Policy & Procedure.



Complaints Procedure

In the first instance, the customer should discuss the issue with the member of staff (or if appropriate learners should discuss with their tutor/assessor) to try and reach an informal agreed solution.

If the issue is not resolved, the staff member will inform their line manager and someone from the senior management team will attempt to contact the customer with a view to finding a solution informally via discussion.

If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the customer should contact the Director of VTS (Chalkwell Lawns, 648-656 London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 9HR) Contact should be made in writing within 30 days of the incident in question, detailing the nature of the complaint, giving as much information as possible, plus details of any action taken so far to try to resolve the issue, so the Director is able to fully investigate the matter.

Within 48 hours of receipt, The Director will send a written acknowledgement to the customer and may request further information.

The Director will then carry out a thorough investigation and provide the customer with a detailed written response and any decisions taken within a further 10 working days. If the Director is unable to complete investigations within this timescale, the customer will be informed and a revised timescale set. The Director may request either a telephone or a face-to-face meeting with the customer in order to try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution. The Director's decision and any remedial action should be considered as final on behalf of Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd.

If the customer is unhappy with the outcome

They can complain to the Department of Education (DFA). Click <u>here</u> to go to the full ESFA complaints procedure. Contact the DFE by post to: Complaints team, **Department for Education School Complaints Unit,** 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. Or by online form <u>here</u>. Dissatisfied customers can also contact the DfE helpline for advice on 0370 000 2288.

Should the complaint held be against the awarding body the director will provide the customer with the relevant awarding body complaints information as VTS work with several. Should the customer still remain dissatisfied the awarding body will provide them with their regulators details to escalate the complaint further.



REVIEW AND VERSION CONTROL This policy is reviewed updated annually

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