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# Professional Futures Ltd

## Customer Complaints Policy

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Written by Marie O'Donnell  
Approved by Lynsey Heeks  
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## **1. Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness and equity for all parties involved in the handling of complaints and to enable a balanced and objective approach to be taken so that a satisfactory conclusion can be reached.

## **2. Scope**

Professional Futures Ltd defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction which merits a response.

These guidelines relate to:

- Courses, services or facilities provided by Professional Futures Ltd
- Action or lack of action taken by Professional Futures Ltd and its staff

The guidelines do not cover:

- Disciplinary issues
- Matters governed by other separate procedures such as harassment, appeals against exclusion or academic appeals.

## **3. Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Directors of Professional Futures Ltd

## **4. Procedure**

### **4.1 Responding to Complaints**

4.1.2 Every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly and objectively and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily. Whilst every complaint is taken seriously and investigated fully, every effort is also made to ensure that staff of Professional Futures Ltd understands that they have equal rights in the process and that they are treated with fairness and objectivity.

4.1.2 Complaints will be dealt with positively, constructively and as far as possible confidentially. If a complaint is upheld, Professional Futures Ltd will seek to provide a reasonable and appropriate response and will correct any mistakes or misunderstandings and will take any other action as appropriate. Where a complaint is upheld against an individual or group this will be dealt with confidentially. Action will be through internal processes and procedures and specific details not reported to the complainant.

4.1.3 Although complaints will be dealt with in confidence this is with the proviso that an individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint made against them.

4.1.4 Complaints against members of staff of Professional Futures Ltd are always classified as formal complaints. The Directors of Professional Futures Ltd must therefore be notified of the complaint.

- 4.1.5 Professional Futures Ltd will treat all complaints seriously and without discrimination. However, where an investigation concludes there is reasonable grounds to believe that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, appropriate action will be taken against the complainant. Professional Futures Ltd reserves the right not to investigate where ongoing complaints are made and grounds for complaint have previously not been found.
- 4.1.6 The time limits set out in these guidelines will normally be followed. However, where for good reason this is not possible, the complainant will be kept notified of progress.
- 4.1.7 The effectiveness of any complaints procedure depends on Professional Futures Ltd being able to collect appropriate information from parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For this reason, anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under these guidelines.
- 4.1.8 These guidelines comprise of a number of stages. Most complaints can be resolved informally by individuals pursuing matters directly with relevant staff. Only where these informal routes have been pursued and the complainant remains dissatisfied, should the formal complaint be invoked.
- 4.1.9 All complaints should be raised **within one month** of the instance which led to the complaint.

## **4.2 Informal Complaints Procedure**

- 4.2.1 Most complaints can be resolved informally and where practical a complaint should be dealt with as close as possible to the point at which it arises.
- 4.2.2 This relates to informal complaints, such as those received verbally and/or those relating to what the complainant views as relatively minor incidents.
- 4.2.3 This also relates to complaints made by learner/apprentice representatives in learner/apprentice feedback. Although all these complaints are classified as “informal complaints” for the purposes of these guidelines, they are all taken seriously and should be investigated thoroughly by the appropriate member of staff.
- 4.2.4 The member of staff who receives an informal complaint will look into the matter and give a verbal response to the complainant/s within 10 working days of the complaint being registered.
- 4.2.5 If the complainant remains dissatisfied then a formal complaint in writing should be made.

### 4.3 Formal Complaints

- 4.3.1 All formal complaints should be made to the Quality Director. Where formal complaints are received by anyone else at PFL, these should be forwarded accordingly.
- 4.3.2 Formal complaints can be received by letter, email ([quality@professional-futures.com](mailto:quality@professional-futures.com)), telephone, or in person by the complainant. Where complaints are received over the telephone or verbally, the Quality Director will ensure completion of the standard Complaints form, detailing:
- The nature of the complaint
  - The informal steps already taken with full details of the response received
  - A statement setting out why the complainant remains dissatisfied.
- 4.3.3 Under normal operating circumstances, receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of its receipt.
- 4.3.4 The Quality Director will co-ordinate and act as administrator for the duration of the complaint investigation.
- 4.3.5 Formal complaints once acknowledged will be forwarded to the Quality Director. A full and thorough investigation will then be carried out.
- 4.3.6 Where appropriate the Quality Director may require a detailed discussion with the complainant to agree the terms of reference for the investigation, confirm key points of concern or to obtain further particulars of the complaint.
- 4.3.7 The Quality Director may wish to convene a hearing involving the complainant and any other persons involved in the matter so they can submit their respective cases.
- 4.3.8 All parties involved including learners/apprentices and staff can be accompanied by a person of their choice to offer support, assistance or advice and any meetings during the investigation. The person can be a friend, recognised trade union member or member of staff but should not constitute legal representation.
- 4.3.9 After completing the investigation the Quality Director will make a decision. Where the complaint is upheld, the Quality Director has authority to refund fees or offer small gestures (such as flowers, cinema tickets or gift vouchers) as an apology and to restore goodwill. Professional Futures Ltd will also ensure remedial action is taken to ensure similar complaints do not arise in the future.
- 4.3.10 The decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant and all other relevant parties, normally within 15 working days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. Where the investigation is likely to take longer all parties will be informed and kept up to date at regular intervals subject to a maximum total investigation period of 30 working days.

## 4.4 Complaint Review

- 4.4.1 The stages of the guidelines set out above have been established to allow a fair and thorough investigation of a complaint and to ensure that it is dealt with objectively. If the complainant, or any party involved in the investigation, believes that a complaint has not been dealt with properly or fairly, they may submit a letter of appeal to the Managing Director within 5 days of receipt of the decision.
- 4.4.2 The Managing Director will consider the circumstances of the case on the basis of the documentary evidence and such advice felt necessary, in order to determine whether there is prima facie evidence to support the complainant's appeal that the case was not handled properly or fairly.
- 4.4.3 In exceptional circumstances, where appropriate and should sufficient evidence exist for further investigation, the Managing Director may lead a further enquiry.
- 4.4.4 The Managing Director's decision will then be final on the basis of the evidence and advice available.
- 4.4.5 The Managing Director's decision will be communicated in writing, normally within 10 working days of the date the request for review was received.
- 4.4.6 In exceptional circumstances where the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision reached by the Managing Director, complaints can be pursued with the respective awarding body e.g ILM, Quasafe etc
- 4.4.7 Once the above process has been followed, and if the learner is also an apprentice on an apprenticeship programme, they can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA does not deal with complaints about employment issues (for example, a problem with the apprentices contract if they are working as an apprentice).

The apprentice must contact the ESFA within 12 months after the issue happened. The complaint should be emailed or posted to the ESFA complaints team at:

ESFA complaints team - [complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk)

**Complaints team - Education and Skills Funding Agency**  
Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road. Coventry. CV1 2WT

The ESFA will reply to let the complainant know what will happen next.

Apprentices can contact the Department for Education at the address below using the [DOE Contact Form](#) if they are unhappy with the ESFA response and/or how the ESFA has dealt with their complaint.

**Complaints - Ministerial and Public Communications Division**  
Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street. Manchester. M1 2WD  
Telephone - 0370 000 2288

## 4.5 Communication

- 4.5.1 Learners/Apprentices will be made aware of this procedure through the Learner Handbook.
- 4.5.2 All staff will be made aware of the contents of this procedure via staff development. Copies of this procedure are accessible by all staff via the Office manual. Management development and staff development will be provided to assist all staff in responding effectively to complaints.
- 4.5.3 For staff/learners/apprentices who do not have English as their first language, support through an interpreter (if required), will be provided. Support will also be provided for learners/apprentices who have difficulty understanding the complaints procedure or making a complaint due to the lack of spoken or written English.
- 4.5.4 For staff/learners/apprentices with a disability and who may have difficulty understanding and reading the complaints procedure or in making a complaint, support will be offered.

For example:

1. People who have a Hearing Impairment
  - a. Hearing loop
  - b. Sign language
2. People with a Visual Impairment
  - a. Documents can be converted to brail
  - b. A reader can be provided
3. People with a Learning Disability
  - a. An easy read version of the complaints procedure can be made available
  - b. An advocate can assist the person with learning disabilities to make the complaint.

## 5. Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of complaints received by the Company is carried out by the Quality Director in conjunction with the other Directors of Professional Futures Ltd.

A summary of complaints received within the academic year is used to inform self-assessment and strategic planning.

## Appendix A





## Appendix B

### COMPLAINTS FORM

The purpose of this form is for individuals to register a complaint. Complainants should be made in writing by letter or email to the Quality Director (QD) at [quality@professional-futures.com](mailto:quality@professional-futures.com)

#### Complainant Details

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel: Work

Home

Mobile

#### Details of Complaint *(A brief summary of the complaint including times & dates)*

#### Informal action already taken and details of the response

Signature

Date

<b>To be completed by Professional Futures Ltd</b>			
<b>Date received by Quality Director (QD)</b>			
<b>Date acknowledgement sent to client</b> <i>(must be within 5 days of receipt of complaint)</i>			
<b>QD outcome and decision</b>			
<b>Date written response sent to client</b> <i>(must be within 15 days of receipt)</i>			
<b>Is the client satisfied?</b>	Yes		No
<b>If client is satisfied, date complaint closed off</b>			
<b>If client is dissatisfied, date complaint escalated to MD</b>			
<b>Signed (QD)</b>		<b>Date</b>	

<b>Date received by Managing Director (MD)</b> <i>(complainant must return within 5 days of receipt of the Quality Directors' decision)</i>			
<b>MD Outcome and Decision</b> <i>(in normal circumstances, must be within 10 working days of the date the request for review was received)</i>			
<b>Date written response sent to client</b>			
<b>Is the client satisfied?</b>	Yes		No
<b>If client is satisfied, date complaint closed off</b>			

<b>If client remains dissatisfied, insert the date the complainant was directed to the awarding body/ESFA</b>			
<b>Place an X in appropriate box</b>		Escalated to awarding body	Escalated to ESFA
<b>Signed (MD)</b>		<b>Date</b>	