

## Apprentice and Employer Complaints Policy

Policy Code:	VO12
Policy Start Date:	March 2018
Policy Review Date:	March 2021

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR36 Complaints Policy

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## **1 Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This policy outlines the procedure to be followed by apprentices and employers, undertaking the apprenticeship programme, who have an issue or dispute with the services of Priory Training.
- 1.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation**

- 2.1 The Pay, Performance and HR Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Human Recourses Director
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all employee are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## **3 Aims**

- 3.1 This policy aims to provide a process to resolve individual complaints in a manner which is as fair and expeditious as possible. It is the Trust's objective to find a solution to individual complaints as early in the procedure as possible.

## **4 Complaints from Apprentices to Priory Training**

- 4.1 When an Apprentice has an issue or dispute relating to the provision of the delivery of services undertaken Priory Training, the Apprentice shall make the matter known to Priory Training in writing by email to [Prioritytraining@prioryacademies.co.uk](mailto:Prioritytraining@prioryacademies.co.uk) – ensuring the phrase Apprentice Complaint is clearly visible within the title of the email.
- 4.2 The apprentice should fully document the complaint and provide evidence, if appropriate.
- 4.3 Priory Training will thoroughly investigate the complaint(s) raised and notify the apprentice in writing within 10 working days.
- 4.4 If necessary, an independent investigator will undertake a full review of the complaint and detail its findings to both parties upon the conclusion of the investigation.

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- 4.5 If the Apprentice is dissatisfied with the processing of, or response received, in relation to any complaint submitted, the Apprentice has the right to escalate the complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency [ESFA].
- 4.6 Any complaint, concerns or enquiries regarding the apprenticeship may be escalated to the ESFA via the apprenticeship helpline on 0800 015 0400 or 0247 682 6482, or by email at [nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeship.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeship.gov.uk).

## **5 Complaints from Employers to Priory Training**

- 5.1 This policy sets out the process for employers of apprentices to make a complaint about the service provided by Priory Training. Priory Training has a separate complaints policy and procedure for apprentices that wish to make a complaint, which can be found on the Priory Federation of Academies website. Priory Training (part of the Priory Federation of Academies) is committed to delivering a high quality service and takes feedback from both students and employers very seriously. It is the aim of Priory Training to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interest of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. Priory Training is keen to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded. Priory Training aims to handle complaints in a manner which:
- a. encourages informal conciliation nearest to the source of the complaint,
  - b. is efficient and fair,
  - c. treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality,
  - d. facilitates early resolution,
  - e. where relevant, ensures that Priory Training practice improves as a result.

For effective oversight of processes and provision, The Priory Training Governance board will monitor the complaints received to check for evidence of trends in failure of provision or delivery.

### **Definitions**

An '*informal complaint*' is defined as an issue which an employer wishes to raise with a member of Priory Training staff, without using the formal complaints process. Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.

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A '*Complaint*' is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about Priory Training's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by, or on behalf of Priory Training.

An '*Appeal*' is 'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions about students' progression, assessment, and awards'. Procedures for Appeals are dealt with through a different process, as detailed in the Student Appeals Guidance Notes.

## **6 Guide to making a complaint**

6.1 The process for raising a complaint by an employer of an apprenticeship learner studying with Priory Training is detailed below.

### **Stage 1: Informal complaints**

Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with relevant departments at the source of the complaint, or via The Priory Training team (priorytraining@prioryacademies.co.uk). The aim is to resolve the problem directly and informally at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved in this manner. Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to the employer complainant, copying in the head of Priory Training at priorytraining@prioryacademies.co.uk who will record the details of all informal employer complaints. Acknowledgement of the complaint will be provided within 48 hours, and a full response given within 4 weeks. If the employer is unable to raise the complaint at the source, or is dissatisfied with the outcome, they should make a formal complaint (see next stage).

### **Stage 2: Formal complaints**

To make a formal complaint an employer should put the matter in writing to Priory Training by email to priorytraining@prioryacademies.co.uk, ensuring the word 'complaint' is in the title. The email should set out the details of the complaint in full and what would be an appropriate resolution. Priory Training staff will log the complaint on the Internal data system. Priory Training will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two working days, and the complaint will be forwarded to an 'Investigating Officer' who has not been previously involved with the complaint. The Investigating Officer will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Investigating Officer will review all information submitted, and meet with relevant members of staff to review the complaint. The Investigating Officer will also speak with the employer complainant to clarify facts where required. As part of the process,

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mediation may be offered to resolve the complaint. If mediation is offered, revised timescales for the resolution of the complaint will be agreed in writing between Priory Training and the complainant. A written response relating to the findings of the inquiry will be issued by the Investigating Officer within a maximum of four weeks from the date of receipt of the original complaint. If the employer complainant is not satisfied with the action taken, he/she may proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

### **Stage 3: Review**

Where employers are not satisfied with the response provided by Priory Training at Stage 2, the complaint can be escalated for investigation by an independent reviewer. The reviewer will not re-investigate the complaint unless new evidence is presented. The independent reviewer will ensure that appropriate procedures are followed, the decision was reasonable, as well as considering any new evidence submitted.

### **Stage 4: Complaints Adjudicator**

If after exhausting this process the employer complainant is still not satisfied, they can escalate their complaint to the Complaints Adjudicator at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Email: [nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk)

Phone: 0800 015 0400 or 0247 682 6482 Please note that the ESFA will not usually investigate complaints more than 12 months after the original decision or action has been taken.

## **7 Policy Change**

- 7.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.



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## **The Priory Federation of Academies Apprentice and Employer Complaints Policy**

This Policy has been approved by the Education & Standards Committee:

Chair of the Committee

Signed..... Name..... Date:.....

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date: .....

Chief Executive Officer

Signed.....Name..... Date:.....

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.