



Appeals and Formal Complaints Policy and Procedure

2023-24

Introduction

This policy relates to appeals from learners (including apprentices) and employers, against a decision in relation to the academic work undertaken by that learner and complaints relating to issues contained within service level agreements, systems, policies, or procedures; this includes complaints against employees and contractors of SR Apprenticeships.

We are committed to delivering a high-quality service and take feedback from apprentices and employers very seriously. It is our aim to settle complaints promptly, fairly and courteously in the best interest of all parties, and to address areas where improvement is needed. We are keen to ensure that the interests and well-being of all those associated with a complaint are properly safeguarded.

Through our complaints process we ensure that:

- complaints and appeals are treated fairly, consistently, transparently, and in a timely manner;
- matters of concern can be raised without risk of disadvantage and any matter raised that may be considered in line with the principles of Whistleblowing will receive the same protections available to Whistle Blowers;
- where complaints or appeals reveal any failure on our part, we take appropriate action to rectify this for the complainant and to identify any others who may have been adversely affected by the same issue
- we review aspects of our service in the light of any complaints or appeals; and
- we maintain duties of confidentiality to third parties, or other legal duties, in responding to complaints and appeals.

Complaints are logged centrally so that oversight of any emerging trends in complaints or concerns can be assessed by our Senior Leadership and Management teams.

Definition

Appeal is defined as a request by a learner for a review of a decision made by a Skills Coach, Tutor Assessor, Internal Moderator, or Internal Verifier employed by SR Apprenticeships and charged with making decisions on learner progression, assessment, certification, and final award.

Complaint is defined as a statement in which there is an expression of dissatisfaction with a particular situation relating to service delivery or staff employed by SR Apprenticeships.

NB: Learners/apprentices, employers and other customers are advised that, before making a formal complaint under this policy, they are encouraged to resolve the issue informally with the individuals providing the service.

Informal complaints are usually quick to resolve and unlikely to require an in-depth investigation.

Guide to making a formal appeal or complaint

Stage 1 – Informal

Where possible, complaints should be raised immediately with the relevant department at the source of the complaint, or via the Operations Manager at SR Apprenticeships, Nicola McNulty. 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.

Complaints should be raised within 20 working days of the event occurring where possible and will only be accepted for investigation following this timeframe where evidence can be provided of why it was not reasonably possible for the complaint to have been raised earlier.

You should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days, with a full response given within 4 weeks. If it is not possible to meet these timeframes you will be contacted and told why and what timeframe you will receive your response in.

Although Stage 1 is informal, the member of staff involved should provide a written outcome to you and copy in the Operations Manager, nicki.mcnulty@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk and complaints@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk who will record the details of all informal complaints.

If as the appellant/complainant, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, you may follow the below stages:

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily through the informal process or within the timescales agreed, or you do not feel that it is appropriate to speak to one of the above members of staff, you may raise a formal complaint with the Operations Director at SR Apprenticeships.

This appeal must be made in writing within 5 days of being notified of the outcome of stage 1.

The email should be titled as a complaint, and set out the details of the complaint in full, include any evidence you have supporting your concern, what action has been taken to date regarding attempting an informal resolution of your complaint and what would be an appropriate resolution.

In the case of appeals/complaints involving associated awarding/professional bodies the Operations Director will notify the appropriate External Moderator/Verifier/ Quality Advisor of the continuation of the appeal/complaints process. Advice will be sought as to whether this process should be passed to the associated awarding/professional body at this stage. If this is the case, then the Operations Director will inform the appellant/complainant as soon as this advice is received.

With the exception of appeals/complaints involving awarding/professional bodies; the appellant/complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation within five working days.

All Stage 2 Complaints should be sent to:

The Operations Director: Kevin Foreman, kevin.foreman@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk

SR Apprenticeships, 32 Mile End Road, Colwick, Nottingham, NG4 2EE.

Stage 3

If the appellant/complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 2, they may appeal to the Managing Director of SR Apprenticeships, Nadine.hughes@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk.

This appeal must be made in writing within five days of being notified of the outcome of the review at Stage 2.

The appellant/complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within five working days.

The Managing Director's decision is final, although where appropriate, the appellant/complainant may contact the appropriate awarding/professional body if they are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 3 and follow the professional body Complaints and Appeals procedure.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint following our internal Complaints and Appeal process, you may request us to supply you with a Completion of Procedures letter, which you can use to support escalation of your complaint to the ESFA complaints team.

In the case of apprentices this is the Education and Skills Funding Agency whose complaints procedure can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>

SR Apprenticeships Appeals/Complaint Form

Stage 1

Before completing this form, learners are advised to follow Stage 1 of the complaints procedure and initially try to rectify the issue prior to submitting a formal complaint.

Stage 2

Raise the complaint with your workplace Apprenticeships Manager.

Stage 3

Escalate the complaint to SR Apprenticeships Operations Director.

Learners are required to complete this form and forward it to the Complaints Officer.

Name:	
Address:	
Email Address:	
Contact Number:	
Date of complaint submitted:	
Date of course:	

Describe the nature of your complaint as fully as

Please use additional sheet if

Signature of		Date:	
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Please return this form to: Kevin Foreman, Operations Director

kevin.foreman@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk

SR Apprenticeships, 32 Mile End Road, Colwick, Nottingham, NG4 2EE