



## Complaints Policy and Procedure

3aaa is committed to providing a supportive working and learning environment to enable all to achieve their goals. We strive to provide the highest quality services and to be responsive to concerns or complaints from any of our customers; whether they are of a teaching or service related nature. Both negative and positive feedback is recognised as a valuable resource to enable us to improve the quality of our services and Apprenticeship provision.

In order that 3aaaa can learn and improve as a result of complaints; accurate and complete records of all complaints received, resulting correspondence, interviews and actions taken will be kept. A report on complaints received and their outcomes will be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer on a monthly basis. Complaints relating to issues with a direct impact on Apprentice experience will be passed to the Director of Quality and Operations for consideration to help to improve customer service throughout the business. Effectiveness of the complaints procedure will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Head of Apprentice Engagement.

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to enable anyone interacting with 3aaa to raise matters of concern about our services or provision to our attention so that they can be investigated and resolved in the clearest and fairest way possible. In most cases this will be achieved without having to conduct the formal complaints procedure; which should be seen as a last resort in reaching a solution.

### What is a Complaint?

The complaints procedure covers any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about:

- Provisions of 3aaa affecting customers (Applicants, Apprentices, employers, stakeholders)
- Actions or lack of actions by 3aaa or its staff
- Standards of service, courses or facilities provided by the 3aaa.

The procedure does not cover the following:

- Matters covered by separate policies or procedures; including Appeals Procedure, Equal Opportunities, Grievance procedure.
- Judgement about individual Apprentice performance or awarding organisation assessment decisions
- Requests for new services or provision

This procedure is for use by any existing or prospective Apprentice, employer or customer who seeks or receives a service from us. It also extends to anyone who may be directly affected by our services or activities. Anonymous complaints will be logged and monitored but not investigated under normal circumstances.



## **Confidentiality and Support**

All complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and with due consideration to all parties involved. In line with our equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated fairly and not suffer any recrimination or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint. Any person named in a complaint, however will be informed and have a right of reply as part of the investigative process.

Complaints must be made by complainants themselves, however we recognise that some Apprentices and vulnerable adults may have difficulties with this and so encourage them to use whatever assistance is required from a third party to make their complaint effectively. The Academy Manager within centre can provide general support and advice on procedures; however it is the complainant's responsibility to seek guidance and support when necessary.

In the event that a hearing is arranged to consider a complaint, any Apprentice, customer, employer or member of staff asked to attend has the right to be accompanied by a person of his/her choosing.

### **Stage 1 – Informal**

The complaint should be resolved early and quickly, preferably keeping it as close to the source of the problem as possible and dealing with it by informal means. By encouraging complainants to come forward with concerns at an early stage, matters can be discussed and any misunderstandings resolved by telephone conversation, face to face meeting, email or letter to the appropriate person.

- Informal complaints will be responded to by the appropriate person within 7 days receipt of the complaint
- If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily at this stage, complainants should raise the matter with the Head of Apprentice Engagement. They will make enquiries and report back to the complainant on the outcome

### **Stage 2 – Formal**

3aaa recognises that informal mechanisms may not resolve all problems and that some problems may be too serious or sensitive to be dealt with by raising the issue directly with the member of staff involved. In these circumstances, the formal complaints procedure should be used.

- A formal complaint should be submitted to the Customer Service Team [customerservices@3aaa.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@3aaa.co.uk)
- The statement of complaint should be as thorough and complete as possible and include any supporting documentation
- The Customer Service Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 48 hours
- The complaint will be investigated within 28 days working days of receipt and the findings recorded
- The complainant will receive confirmation of the outcome of investigation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received as a result of Stage 2, the complaint may be taken to Stage 3 of the procedure.



### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

A copy of the complaint (with any supporting evidence) should be sent to the Chief Operating Officer within 14 days of receiving the Stage 2 response. The COO will hear the complaint and review the evidence. The COO will investigate the complaint, including all documentary evidence

- The COO may seek to resolve the complaint based on the documentary evidence alone.
- Following investigation, a written response will be produced detailing whether the complaint is upheld or not and detailing action(s) necessary to resolve the issue.
- The decision of the COO is final.

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