

# CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

<b>Family:</b>	Quality
<b>Reference Code</b>	Q/8
<b>Line Manager Responsible:</b>	Director of Education & Quality
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## ***Scope & Principles***

Free to Learn Ltd (Free2Learn) is committed to providing high quality services and welcomes suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Taking account of users' views enables us to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement. To support our commitment to improving the quality of the services we deliver we have adopted a complaints policy.

This document covers the concerns and complaints procedures used to deal with complaints involving staff, external stakeholders, and Free2Learn clients including apprentices and employers. Complaints that relate to internal matters involving staff or contractors will be subject to Free2Learn disciplinary or grievance procedures.

The principles on which our complaints procedure is based are:

- We will always seek an informal resolution of complaints where possible;
- Our procedure will be publicised and Free2Learn will promote open access to it;
- All staff will receive information on this procedure during induction;
- All staff and senior managers will adopt a solution focused approach in response to justified complaints;
- All complaints will be subject to impartial review.

## ***Responsibility***

- Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the Senior Leadership Team
- Day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this procedure lies with the recruitment Team Leader.

## ***Concerns***

- Free2learn expects that the majority of issues can be resolved at an early stage through informal discussions. Therefore, if a concern arises, the first step is to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant staff member, either by email or verbally, and discuss it with them.
- Free2learn will respond directly to individuals who raise concerns via email or learner forums. Individuals will be advised to raise their concerns with the relevant team within Free2learn in order to address the concern(s).
- It should be noted that a written record of issues raised at this early stage will not normally be made.

- If the concern remains unresolved, a formal complaint should be instigated through Free2Learn Concerns and Complaints procedure.

### ***How to make a Complaint***

If you wish to make a complaint about our services or your treatment by Free2Learn you can use this concerns and complaints policy. Complaints can be made about any aspect of our service, including an individual, the centre, or a centre policy.

We encourage complaints to be made at the time the issue arises, but within 1 month.

At any stage of the complaint's procedure, you are entitled to seek support from any person unconnected with Free2Learn.

If you feel your complaint is serious, you are entitled to proceed directly to Stage 2 of the procedure.

#### ***STAGE 1***

The first stage of our procedure is to discuss the complaint with the member of staff concerned or a member of the Senior Leadership Team where applicable. This might be done verbally, by telephone, or in writing but within one month of the action occurring. Free2Learn staff will attempt to resolve this issue immediately but if the matter requires further investigation or further information is needed, we will get back to you within an agreed timescale, usually within five working days of receiving the complaint.

Free to Learn Ltd staff will seek to reach an informal and mutually agreeable solution to your complaint.

If you have been unable to reach a solution informally you may proceed to stage 2 of our procedure.

#### ***STAGE 2***

You should write. Via email to [quality@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:quality@free2learn.org.uk), outlining the nature of your complaint and providing as much detail as possible. This should be within one month of the action that gave rise to your complaint or within one month of completing Stage 1.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will respond within 10 working days, acknowledging your complaint. We aim to inform you of the outcome of your complaint within 4 weeks. This deadline may need to be extended in certain circumstances but you will be informed of this in writing.

During the investigation, you will be provided with an opportunity to have a meeting to explain the circumstances of your complaint.

The complaint will be dealt with according to all the relevant Policies and Procedures. The relevant members of staff will be involved in the investigation.

### **STAGE 3**

If you are not happy with the response provided you are entitled to escalate your complaint to the COO at Free2Learn.

You will have the opportunity to meet with a Senior Manager to discuss your complaint and will receive a final report and details of any proposed actions within an agreed timescale, usually within one month

You will be invited for a meeting to discuss the complaint and the outcome.

The decision of the COO will be final.

### ***Monitoring of complaints***

Details of all complaints together with outcome letters where applicable will be stored. Free2learn monitors complaints carefully. A termly report on complaints is produced and shared with the Senior Management Team detailing issues raised, areas of study, timeliness of resolution, and any subsequent actions. In addition, Free2learn reports annually to its Governing Body on Complaints.

#### **Contact Details:**

**Free2Learn**

**263 Mare Street**

**London**

**E8 3NS**

**Telephone: 0208 525 9420**

**E-mail: [quality@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:quality@free2learn.org.uk)**