

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Policy Statement

GEM Partnership are committed to ensuring our clients, workers, apprentices/learners, staff and stakeholders receive the best possible service. GEM Partnership do however recognise that issues may arise and are committed to rectify any problem as soon as it is brought to our attention. This policy sets out expectations regarding GEM Partnerships complaints policy.

### Introduction

GEM Partnership is committed to providing the best possible service, and we recognise that occasionally stakeholders may feel that they have cause to complain about the service they have received.

We encourage feedback from all stakeholders, including complaints and how we can do things better.

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, this will be dealt with as a failure of service under the terms of our Complaints Policy.

### Aim

GEM Partnership aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. GEM Partnership will;

- Aim to put things right quickly for our stakeholders when they go wrong.
- Keep our clients, workers, apprentices/learners, staff and other stakeholders informed of the progress of their complaint and result of any investigation.
- Seek to learn from each complaint to continuously improve our performance.
- Set performance targets for responding to complaints and monitor our performance against these targets.
- Advise our stakeholders of the right to complain to the relevant regulatory body if they remain dissatisfied after their complaint has been through all stages of the internal complaint's procedure.

### Monitoring

GEM Partnership is committed to continuous improvement in its service and delivery.

GEM Partnership will;

- Make it simple to make a complaint.
- Endeavour to respond to complaints within the timescales stated and keep all informed.
- Ensure that there is a full explanation to the conclusion of the complaint in a preferred format.
- Provide information of any changes made to our service following the complaint.
- Review our policy annually.

### Responsibility

The Board of Directors are responsible for developing and encouraging the highest quality of service and experience for all stakeholders.

## Communication

GEM Partnerships Complaints Policy and Procedure will be readily available to all clients, staff, workers, apprentices/learners and stakeholders and can be found at [www.gempartnership.com](http://www.gempartnership.com), and in the learner handbook, employer handbook and the commitment statement. Please request a copy from [training@gem-training.com](mailto:training@gem-training.com), this also includes a copy in another language or braille.

## Complaints Procedures

### Complaints Procedure for Internal Staff

If an internal staff member has a problem or concern about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues they are encouraged to refer to GEM Partnerships Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. This is saved on GEM Partnerships shared drive SharePoint.

### Complaints Procedure – Recruitment

All complaints should be made in writing to Lee Rankin – Managing Director:

- Email: [lee.rankin@gempartnership.com](mailto:lee.rankin@gempartnership.com)
- Postal address: 2 Cook Way, North West Industrial Est, Peterlee SR8 2HY

Stage 1 - GEM Partnership will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and asking you to confirm or explain the details set out. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within [2-5] days of us receiving your complaint.

Stage 2 - We will record your complaint in our central register within a day of having received it.

Stage 3 - We will acknowledge your reply to our acknowledgment letter and confirm what will happen next. You can expect to receive our acknowledgement letter within 5 days of your reply.

Stage 4 - We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps;

- We may ask the member of staff who dealt with you to reply to your complaint within 5 days of our request.
- We will then examine the member of staff's reply and the information you have provided for us.
- If necessary, we may ask you to speak to them. This will take up to 4 days from receiving their reply.

Stage 5 - Lee Rankin will then invite you to meet him to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. He will do this within 5 days of the end of our investigation.

Stage 6 - Within 2 days of the meeting Lee Rankin will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions he has agreed with you. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, Lee Rankin will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include his suggestions for resolving the matter. He will do this within 5 days of completing his investigation.

Stage 7 - If you are still not satisfied you can write to us again. Another Director of the company will review Lee's decision within 10 days

Stage 8 - We will let you know of the outcome of this review within 5 days of the end of the review. We will write to you confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Employment Agencies Standards Office at the Department of Trade and Industry at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/employment-agency-standards-inspectorate/about> Spur 2, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 1 Victoria Street London SW1H 0ET

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation, REC at Dorset House, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 27-45 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT <https://www.rec.uk.com/recruiters/compliance/complaints>

Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority - GLAA at PO Box 10272, Nottingham, NG2 9PB [www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk)

If we have to change any of the time scales above, we will let you know and explain why.

#### Complaints Procedure - Training

Stage 1 - All complaints must be made in writing, clearly stating why the complaint is being made to [training@gem-training.com](mailto:training@gem-training.com). If the written complaint is in relation to an assessment decision, please see GEM Partnerships Quality Assurance Policy. This can be requested from [training@gem-training.com](mailto:training@gem-training.com).

Stage 2 - An appropriate Manager must agree a date to meet/telephone the complaint to discuss and, if possible, resolve the matter in question.

Stage 3 - If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2, either route A or B is followed, as appropriate:

- Route A - If the complaint takes the form of an appeal on an assessment issue i.e. against assessment decision, then the assessment decision appeals procedures is to be followed below.
- Route B - If the complaint does not take the form of an assessment decision appeal to the Operations Manager, Kelly Lee: [kelly.lee@gem-training.com](mailto:kelly.lee@gem-training.com) will review the complaint within 10 working days of Stage 2 meeting / telephone call.

Stage 4 - The Operations Manager will investigate the complaint and their decision must be sent to all parties within 10 working days.

Stage 5 - If the complaint is still not resolved, then it can be escalated to the Operations Director, Maria Miller: [Maria.Miller@gempartnership.com](mailto:Maria.Miller@gempartnership.com). The Operations Director will make the final decision on the complaint outcome.

The Appeals Process (assessment decision – framework qualifications and end point assessment)

Stage 1 – All appeals must be made in writing, clearly stating why the appeal is being made. Apprentices / learners – can make an appeal against an assessment decision on their qualification or end point assessment within 20 days of an assessment decision being made. The written appeal can be handed to the relevant Trainer or sent directly to [training@gem-training.com](mailto:training@gem-training.com).

Stage 2 – If Stage 1 is not resolved by the Trainer, the appeal will be passed to the Internal Quality Assurance Team (IQA's) within 5-working days

Stage 3 – If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 2, the Lead IQA will meet with the Operations Director, who will investigate further and if necessary, talk to the complainant within 5 working days.

Stage 4 – If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 3, it will be passed to the relevant awarding body / awarding organisation or the qualification regulator. Following their investigation, the decision is final.

#### Awarding Organisations

Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance - <https://www.highfieldqualifications.com/downloads>

Pearson - <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints>.

Ofqual - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure>

EAL - <https://eal.org.uk/>

#### End Point Assessment Organisations

Highfield Assessments - <https://www.highfieldqualifications.com/downloads>

UCE - [www.uce.org.uk/epa-end-point-assessment/](http://www.uce.org.uk/epa-end-point-assessment/)

TQUK - <https://epa.tquk.org/>

DSW - <https://www.dswconsulting.co.uk/>

If you are dissatisfied with your final outcome on a complaint or assessment decision you may contact the ESFA via email to [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk) or put them in writing to: Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT.

For further details please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure#complain-about-a-post-16-training-provider-college-or-employer-we-fund>