

Finchale Group

It's all positive

Complaints & Procedure Policy

COMPLAINTS & PROCEDURE POLICY



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



European Union
European
Social Fund

'Supported by the Youth Employment Initiative'



Contents

Introduction	3
Definition of a Complaint	3
Purpose	3
Confidentiality.....	3
Responsibility	4
Aims	4
Receiving Complaints.....	5
Complaints Procedure of The Finchale Training College	5
Variation of the Complaints	6
Monitoring and Learning from Complaints	6
Policy Review	7

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Finchale Training College views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (or organisation) that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at The Finchale Training College knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

Finchale Training College defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with a member of staff or trustee of Finchale Training College), encompassing all aspects of our work and conduct as we work to achieve our aims.

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Finchale Training College, including the public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to Finchale Training College Internal Complaints and Grievance on such matters

Purpose

The complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees of Finchale Training College

Finchale Training College's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- respond within a stated period.
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- act where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to Finchale Training College attention normally within 2 weeks of the issue arising.
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff at Finchale Training College.
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- allow Finchale Training College a reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Finchale Training College's control.

Aims

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly.
- keep matters low-key.
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to The Finchale Training College e.g., donor, volunteer, sponsor
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words

Complaints Procedure of Finchale Training College

Stage 1

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Complaints to be addressed to **Alison Tate Performance and Governance Manager**, The Finchale Training College, Richard Annand VC House, Unit 18 Mandale Park, Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham, DH1 1TH. alison.tate@finchalegroup.co.uk

Complaints letters or emails sent should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

On receiving the complaint, the Performance and Governance Manager records it in the complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint

is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage 2

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply

The Board of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

As Finchale Training College is an England & Wales Registered Charity, a complaint to the Charity Commission can be made at any stage. Information can be found at www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Finchale Training College reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Signed:

Neil Johnson, Chief Executive Officer.

Date: