



REACHING OUTCOMES USING TAILORED EDUCATION & SKILLS

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY 2025-26

<b>Approved by:</b>	Mr Daniel Luford (Director) Mr Nick Lyons (Director)	<b>Date:</b> 01/04/23
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## Introduction

As an organisation, we are committed to providing the best possible outcomes for the young people we support. We continually aim to improve and reflect on the service that we offer. An important part of this process is listening to feedback from all stakeholders, ensuring we have strong accountability measures throughout our organisation. The aim of this policy is to act as guidance, should someone feel that we have fallen below the high standards we set ourselves. We hope to resolve complaints swiftly and impartially by listening and adapting to the needs of the people we support.

## Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of the young people that are supported by Routes Learning. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Routes Learning about any provision or services that we provide.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **concern** may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A **complaint** may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Routes Learning takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, company directors (Daniel Luford and Nick Lyons), will deal directly with the concern. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, these will again be dealt with by company directors.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Routes Learning will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint against a tutor can be made in person, in writing ([danluford@routeslearning.co.uk](mailto:danluford@routeslearning.co.uk) or [nicklyons@routeslearning.co.uk](mailto:nicklyons@routeslearning.co.uk)) or by telephone (Nick Lyons: 07792968878, Dan Luford: 07756359217). They may also be made by a

third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

If the concern or complaint is against the directors, we would advise the complainant to contact the LADO.

BCP LADO on 01202 817600 or email [LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Referral form to BCP LADO Service: <https://www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/documents/children-young-people-and-families/LADOREferral-Form.pdf>

Dorset Duty Service ChAD on 01305 228866 or email [eastlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:eastlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

## Responding to complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Routes Learning wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

### Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Directors (unless they are about the directors themselves). This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

One of the directors will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 48 hours. Within this response, they will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

During the investigation, the director will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the director will provide a formal written response within 14 days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the director is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Routes Learning will take to resolve the complaint.

The director will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

## Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with both directors (or independent investigator if complaint about a director) will be arranged. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the directors (or independent investigator) in writing, within 7 days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Director (or independent investigator) will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 7 days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Director (or independent investigator) will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 7 days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the director (or independent investigator) will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Director (or independent investigator) will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

## Taking a complaint to an independent body

We will try hard to resolve any complaint brought to us using the above procedures. Anyone who has gone through the procedures outlined above and still feels unhappy with the way their complaint has been dealt with may want to take their complaint to an independent body. If Routes Learning procedures have failed to resolve the complaint, we would encourage anyone to do this.

Although it is almost always best to make complaints to Routes Learning in accordance with this policy and procedures, we recognise the right of individuals to complain directly to independent bodies such as BCP LADO. Unless instructed otherwise, as soon as we become aware of complaints reported in this way, we will treat them as a Stage 1 complaint initially.

## Confidentiality

Complaints must be dealt with in the strictest confidence and information sharing must take place only on a 'need to know' basis.

## Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints make it very difficult for us to carry out an investigation and will be dealt with at the joint discretion of the Directors of Routes Learning, Nick Lyons and Daniel Luford.

If an anonymous complaint relates to harassment or abuse, every attempt will be made to investigate the complaint as much as possible, and/or refer it to other agencies as appropriate.

## Tutor training

Routes Learning train all tutors in relation to its Complaints Policy and Procedures. Tutors will be expected to attend the training sessions as and when required to do so unless otherwise agreed with the Directors.

## Review and monitoring Complaints

To enable us to monitor complaints the Routes Learning Management team will maintain a central complaints log, including records of all written complaints received.

This policy will be reviewed annually. All changes made to this policy will be communicated with all relevant stakeholders.