

- Leadership
- Skills
- Foundation

Complaints Policy



Complaints policy

The scope of this policy

This policy covers complaints the following parties wish to make in relation to the qualifications, awards and associated services offered by the Leadership Skills Foundation. These parties are:

- Centres
- Learners/delegates (i.e. those registered on a Leadership Skills Foundation programme)
- Members of the public
- Partner organisations
- Other organisations and interested parties (including qualification regulators)

It is important should anyone feel they have encountered a level of service that is below both their and our expectations that they raise any concerns with us immediately so that we may address them and learn lessons.

What is out of scope for this policy

1. Appeals against decisions made by a centre

If an individual is unhappy about the way an assessment has been delivered and conducted and has exhausted the centre's internal appeals process they can appeal to the Leadership Skills Foundation using the appeals policy.

2. Appeals against decisions made by the Leadership Skills Foundation

If an individual or centre disagrees with a decision that the Leadership Skills Foundation has made in relation to any qualification or award delivery (e.g. centre status, placing sanctions on a centre, adjusting learner achievements, etc.) an appeal should be raised in line with the appeals policy.

Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered in accordance with our appeals policy.

3. Concerns about suspected malpractice or maladministration

If an individual suspects malpractice or maladministration may have occurred at a centre they should notify us any concerns in accordance with the whistleblowing policy.

The responsibility of the centre in dealing with complaints from learners/delegates

The centre should take all reasonable steps to ensure all centre staff involved in the management, administration, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications or awards are made aware of this policy and its contents.

In addition, the centre must have an internal complaints policy and associated procedures to manage complaints made by learners/delegates. The policy should enable an individual to access a complaints procedure where a complaint can be heard and resolved as required through the centre. Learners/delegates must be made aware of this internal complaints policy and how to access it should they wish to make a complaint to the centre.

If an individual wishes to make a complaint about a centre directly to the Leadership Skills Foundation, they must first go through the centre's complaints process before bringing the complaint to the Leadership Skills Foundation. In this case, the following procedures should be followed.

Process for making a complaint

Complaints about the Leadership Skills Foundation

All of our staff have been trained to support centres, learners/delegates and other parties, so attempts should first be made to sort out any problem by contacting the person they dealt with or their main contact at the Leadership Skills Foundation. If this person cannot help, or there is a need to speak or contact someone else, the centre can ask for the contact details of the relevant manager.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the manager, a written complaint should be sent, normally within **one month** of the event you are complaining about.

For centres, a complaint can be made through the complaints form on the Leadership Skills Foundation Centre Hub (available from December 2023).

For all other parties, a complaint can be made through completing this [online complaints form](#) or by writing to the Leadership Skills Foundation (see the contact us section at the end of this policy).

Complaints about a centre

Before making a complaint about a centre (e.g. if there is a feeling that a centre has made a significant breach in our procedures) to the Leadership Skills Foundation, a learner/delegate

(or any other interested party) must have been supported through and exhausted the centre's complaint policy and procedure.

Evidence of this, and details of the outcome of the complaint, may be asked for to support the review of the complaint. This will be considered and the complainant may be referred to our appeals policy or our whistleblowing policy.

For this reason, it is expected that complaints about centres directly to the Leadership Skills Foundation will only happen in exceptional circumstances.

To make a complaint, please either complete this [online complaints form](#) or by writing to the Leadership Skills Foundation (see the contact us section at the end of this policy).

Information required within the complaint

When you contact us, please provide us with the following information:

- Date of complaint.
- Complainant name and contact details.
- Name and contact details of the centre (if applicable).
- The Leadership Skills Foundation qualification, award and/or service the complaint relates to.
- A brief description of complaint. Please include all information that you believe to be relevant (e.g. key dates, communication you have received, names of individuals that have been spoken to, etc.).
- For complaints about a centre, details of the outcome of any internal complaints procedures carried out by the centre.

Leadership Skills Foundation investigation into a complaint

The Leadership Skills Foundation will acknowledge receipt of complaint within five working days, identifying who will be investigating into the complaint.

A full response to a complaint should be expected within 20 working days. If a complaint is more complex or involves people who are not available at the time, we may extend this. Further information or clarification may be requested during this period to ensure we have full details of the complaint. In some instances, we may request a meeting with the complainant in order to investigate the reason for the complaint in more detail.

In such instances, the Leadership Skills Foundation will contact all parties concerned to inform them of what steps are going to be taken and provide a revised timescale.

For all complaints received, the Leadership Skills Foundation will ensure that the person making the response will not have a conflict of interest in the reason the complaint was

raised. If there is a conflict of interest that cannot be mitigated against an independent review of the complaint may be initiated.

Outcomes following the investigation into a complaint

Following the investigation into the complaint the Leadership Skills Foundation will communicate the outcome of the investigation into the complaint and any associated actions. The possible outcomes are:

1. The Leadership Skills Foundation uphold the complaint and set actions to address the cause of the complaint. See the 'successful complaints and taking action' section below for further details of the information we may include or actions we may take in our response to a complaint.
2. The Leadership Skills Foundation do not uphold the complaint and provide the rationale for this decision.
3. The Leadership Skills Foundation refer the complainant to appeals policy and request the raising of an appeal.
4. The Leadership Skills Foundation refer the complainant to the whistleblowing policy and request that the whistleblowing procedures are followed (for some complaints made about a centre only).

The responsible officer will update the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee with details of the complaint and the outcome in an appropriate timeframe.

Next steps following the communication of the outcome

For all outcomes the complainant is required to confirm, within 10 working days, that they accept the outcome or whether they would like to appeal against the outcome, in which case the appeals policy and associated procedures should be followed. This may be directed to an independent review panel as outlined in the appeals policy.

Complaints brought to our attention by the regulators

At times, qualification regulators notify us about failures in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation. These will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain if the same issue could affect any Leadership Skills Foundation qualifications, awards or services.

Successful complaints and taking action

In situations where a complaint, or part of a complaint, has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions to improve our service, policies and procedures such as:

- a) Identify any other centre, learner/delegate who has/may be affected by that failure.
- b) Correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure.
- c) Ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

d) Issue sanctions and/or action plans to identify areas for centre improvement.

Policy review arrangements

The Leadership Skills Foundation will review the policy as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to centre, learner/delegate and third party feedback or requests from, or good practice guidance issued by the regulatory authorities.

Contact us

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact the Leadership Skills Foundation via policies@leadershipskillsfoundation.org or in writing to the Leadership Skills Foundation, Loughton Lodge, Bradwell Road, Milton Keynes, MK8 9LA.



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