

Alt Valley Community Trust Complaints and Appeals Policy

Introduction

Alt Valley Community Trust is committed to providing a high quality experience for all its users through its training delivery. It encourages a positive environment in which informal contact and feedback from staff, learners/apprentice and associates is welcomed and where complaints can be dealt with effectively and efficiently. The complaints procedure outlines the processes to be used when a learner/ apprentice, parent or guardian, or employer has cause for concern.

This policy covers:

Complaints about the process, service or staff of Alt Valley Community Trust

All stakeholders have the right to complain and appeal against any aspect of service delivery. AVCT support our service users when they feel that our service has fallen below their expectations. Each complaint or appeal will be dealt in a professional and courteous manner by a relevant member of staff. The nature of the complaint or appeal will determine which member of staff will investigate and take action.

All complaints and appeals will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality and information released only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint or appeal.

Responsibility

The Head of Education and Quality Manager have full responsible for developing and encouraging excellent customer care and high standard of operational practice.

AVCT Complaints and appeals policies and procedures will be readily available to all learners/apprentices and stakeholders. A copy can be requested from our Head of Education; Lesley Baugh at lesleybaugh@altvalley.co.uk Employers will receive this information as part of their sign up process.

Complaints Policy

Policy Aim

AVCT is committed to providing the best possible service, and we recognise that occasionally people or companies may feel that they have cause to complain about the service they have received.

For the purposes of our organisation, we define stakeholders as:

- employers
- learners/apprentices
- funding bodies (ESFA) Regulatory bodies (OFSTED) and external quality assurance bodies (EQA provider)

Coverage

The complaints policy covers complaints from anyone who receives, requests or is affected by AVCT's services. This includes, although is not limited to:

- The learner/apprentice
- The employer of an apprentice
- The parent or guardian of the learner/apprentice

A complaint may relate to:

- The quality and standard of services
- The quality of facilities for delivery and assessment
- Treatment by, attitude or behaviour of an AVCT employee
- The failure of AVCT staff to follow an appropriate administrative process

Application of the policy

AVCT aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively and will:

- Aim to put things right quickly for our stakeholders should they go wrong
- Keep our apprentices, staff and other stakeholders informed of the progress of their complaint and result of any investigation

- Seek to learn from each complaint to improve future 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 Education and Skills Funding Agency or Department for Education our End-Point Assessment Organisations and Awarding Bodies if they remain dissatisfied after their complaint has been through all stages of the internal complaint procedure

AVCT is committed to continuous improvement within our service delivery.

- We will make it easy and straightforward for you to make a complaint
- We will endeavour to respond to your complaint within the timescales and keep you informed
- We will ensure that you have a full explanation to your complaint in your preferred format
- We will tell you if changes have been made to services following your complaint.
- We will ensure all complaints are handled sensitively and treated in the strictest confidence.
- We will review our policies and practices at regular intervals.

Procedure

<p>Stage 1 The complaint is verbally identified to either a staff member or our Head of Education or Quality Manager, is successfully resolved under verbal agreement by all parties.</p>	
<p>Stage 2 If stage 1 does not resolve the complaint or the complaint is written, and then the written complaint is passed to a manager, who must agree a date to meet/phone the complainant to discuss and, if possible, resolve the complaint. The manager will investigate the complaint and their decision must be sent to all parties within 10 working days of the complaint meeting.</p>	
<p>Stage 3 If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2, either route A or B is followed, as appropriate.</p>	
<p>Route A If the complaint takes the form of an appeal on an assessment issue e.g. against an assessment decision, then the assessment decisions appeals procedure is to be followed.</p>	<p>Route B If the complaint does not take the form of an assessment decision appeal the Head of Education will review the complaint within 10 working days of the Stage 2 meeting.</p>

Appeals Policy

Policy Aim

The purpose of an appeals procedure is to ensure that every person who is not satisfied with the outcome of a decision has the right to appeal against the decision that has been made.

AVCT is committed to providing a high-quality experience for all their learners/apprentices and undertake to treat each and every one fairly and consistently.

The appeals procedure applies to any learner/apprentice undertaking a programme of learning through AVCT. All appeals must be lodged within 20 days of the activity they wish to appeal against.

Grounds for an Appeal

All apprentices/employers have the right to appeal against assessment and grading decisions which are unclear, or seem unfair. The reasons for appeal are:

- They believe the assessment process or decision has been unfair
- They believe not all the appropriate evidence of competence has been considered
- They think that the assessor or assessment process has misunderstood the context of the evidence generated
- They believe their requirements under the fair access policy were not supported or appropriately addressed and this adversely impacted on the assessment outcome

If an employer appeals on behalf of the apprentice the employer must ensure that it has obtained the written permission of the apprentice(s) concerned, because if the appeal is about a grade award, the results can go down as well as up as a result of an investigation i.e. a pass mark could go down to a fail mark.

The following cannot be appealed:

- Appeals submitted more than 20 working days after the notification of the preliminary grade decision by AVCT to the apprentice's employer.
- Anything that should be dealt with under an employer's own disciplinary or grievance procedure
- Anything involving an awarding organisation of regulated qualifications that have been delivered as part of the apprenticeship (either mandatory or non-mandatory)
- Anything not involving the apprenticeship on-programme delivery and activities.

Procedure

<p>Stage 1</p> <p>All appeals must be made in writing, clearly stating why the appeal is being made.</p> <p>Apprentices can make an appeal against an assessment decision within 20 days of an assessment decision being made.</p> <p>The written appeal can be handed to the relevant Assessor or sent directly to the Head of education.</p>
<p>Stage 2</p> <p>If stage 1 is not resolved by the Assessor the appeal will be passed to the internal quality assurer (IQA) within 5 working days.</p>
<p>Stage 3</p> <p>If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 2, the Head of Education will investigate further and if necessary talk to the complainant within 5 working days.</p>
<p>Stage 4</p> <p>If the appeal is not resolved at Stage 3, it will be passed to the relevant body, which may be the external quality assurer. Following their investigation, the decision is final.</p>

Process for resolving any queries or complaints in relation to the Apprenticeship;

Please refer to **Alt Valley Community Trusts** complaints procedure provided for the first point of contact regarding any queries or complaints.

Below is the details of how to make a complaint externally from AVCT should you not be completely satisfied with AVCT's resolution regarding your initial complaint.

Contact Details 1	
Organisation	Alt Valley Community Trust
First Contact Name	Lesley Baugh
E-mail address	lesleybaugh@altvalley.co.uk
Phone Number	0151 546 5514
Contact Details 2	
Organisation	End Point Assessment Organisation
First Contact Name	Added at point of request
E-mail address	apprenticeships@cityandguilds.com
Phone Number	0844 543 0000
Contact Details	ESFA

3	
Organisation	Education & Skills Funding Agency
Address	Complaints Team Education and Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House Quinton House Coventry CV1 2WT
E-mail address	Complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk
Phone Number	0800 015 0400
	If you are not happy with the response from ESFA, you can escalate your complaint with the Department of Education
Address	Complaints Ministerial and Public Communications Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD
DfE Contact Form	https://form.education
Phone Number	0370 000 2288

This policy is available on the AVCT website