Empowering Futures

# Learner Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

## Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all learner enquiries, complaints, and appeals are addressed promptly, fairly, and transparently. Empowering Futures is committed to providing high-quality education and support services. When learners feel that standards have not been met, or they wish to challenge a decision, this policy outlines a clear process for raising and resolving concerns.

## Scope:

This policy applies to all learners enrolled at Empowering Futures, regardless of age, funding status, or programme type. It includes learners on adult education courses, alternative provision placements, vocational training, and privately funded tuition.

## Policy Statement:

Empowering Futures values learner feedback as a vital part of improving services and ensuring satisfaction. We are committed to resolving concerns at the earliest opportunity through informal and formal channels, and in line with regulatory and awarding body requirements. All complaints and appeals are handled with confidentiality, sensitivity, and without prejudice.

## Key Principles:

- Accessibility: The procedure is easy to access and understand.
- Timeliness: Issues are resolved as quickly as possible.
- Fairness: All parties are treated impartially and respectfully.
- Confidentiality: Information is shared only with those directly involved in the resolution process.
- Continuous Improvement: Lessons learned from complaints and appeals inform service improvement.

## Procedures:

1. 1. Learner Enquiries and Informal Resolution:

- Learners are encouraged to speak directly with their tutor or course leader if they have concerns or questions about their learning experience, assessment, or treatment.
- Most issues can be resolved informally through discussion and do not require a formal complaint.
- Staff must document the enquiry and response, including any agreed actions, in the learner’s file.

1. 2. Formal Complaints Procedure (Stage 1):

- If a learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of informal resolution, they may submit a formal complaint in writing using the Learner Complaint Form.
- Complaints should be submitted within 10 working days of the issue arising.
- The Centre Manager will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days and investigate the complaint.
- A written response will be provided within 10 working days, outlining findings, conclusions, and any actions to be taken.

1. 3. Appeals Procedure (Stage 2):

- Learners may appeal an assessment decision or outcome if they believe the process was unfair or procedures were not followed.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receiving the decision and should include evidence.
- The appeal is reviewed by an independent panel not previously involved in the assessment.
- The outcome will be shared within 15 working days, along with details of next steps or referral to the awarding body.

1. 4. Referral to Awarding Body (Stage 3):

- If a learner remains dissatisfied after completing the internal process, they may escalate the matter to the awarding organisation.
- Empowering Futures will cooperate fully with any external investigations or recommendations.

1. 5. Complaints Against Staff or Safeguarding Concerns:

- Complaints involving allegations against staff will be handled by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Centre Director.
- Any safeguarding concerns will be escalated according to the organisation’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

1. 6. Record Keeping and Reporting:

- All complaints and appeals are logged in a central register.
- Records include complaint details, investigation outcomes, response times, and follow-up actions.
- The Quality Lead reviews logs termly to identify trends or recurring issues for action.

## Support for Learners:

- Learners can request support from a trusted tutor, key worker, or advocate when making a complaint or appeal.
- Staff are expected to support learners in navigating the procedure and understanding their rights.

## Monitoring and Review:

- This policy is reviewed annually or in response to significant feedback or changes in regulation.
- Summary reports are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and used to drive service improvement.

## Approval and Review:

Date of Implementation: April 2025
Next Review Date: March 2026
Approved by: Rhean White - Director