

The Grounded Learning Partnership

Complaints Policy

Introduction

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard or quality of service, action or lack of action by The Grounded Learning Training Partnership, which has affected an individual or group of individuals in receipt of a service provided by The Grounded Learning Partnership.”

This Policy sets out the procedure to be followed in dealing with complaints from members of the public. It covers complaints about general services provided by the organisation.

A copy of the “Public Complaints Procedure” will be made available wherever The Grounded Learning Partnership activities occur.

The Grounded Learning Partnership encourages anyone wishing to make a complaint to do so as soon as possible. Early action can help ensure a thorough investigation and appropriate response. The organisation expects the Complaints Procedure will take no longer than 6 months maximum to complete.

Complaints will be dealt with in confidence by the organisation - in line with The Grounded Learning Partnership’s Code of Confidentiality.

The Grounded Learning Partnership is an organisational member of COSCA and as such are required to adhere to COSCA’s Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

Scope

This policy and procedure relates to all services provided by The Grounded Learning Partnership.

Principles

When responding to a complaint we will adhere to the following principles:

- Those who complain will be given a clear response to their complaint within clearly defined timescales and in a sensitive and sympathetic manner.
- We will use the evaluation of complaints to improve our service delivery.
- Complaints will be well managed, objective and aimed at resolving problems as soon as possible in a manner, which respects confidentiality and privacy.
- An independent advocate who is not employed by The Grounded Learning Partnership, or otherwise connected, will be suggested to support the complainant. The complainant will not be discriminated against for making a complaint.

Any complaint or allegation which indicates possible or actual abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk of harm will be dealt with via The Grounded Learning Partnership's Child or Adult Protection Policy which is linked to the Grampian Multi Agency Supporting and Protecting Adults from Harm.

The Complaints Procedure

Normally complaints should be lodged at the earliest stage within the complaints procedure and then proceed, as appropriate, by way of appeal through the stages.

The Grounded Learning Partnership's Complaint Procedure encompasses the following stages:

Firstly there will be an **Informal channel** through the Individual member of staff delivering the service. This stage may be used to advise a member of staff of a particular problem allowing them to resolve the matter first hand. The member of staff should respond to the complaint within 3 working days.

If the complaint is not resolved within this informal stage it will then pass to a **Partner of The Grounded Learning Partnership** and will become a **Formal Complaint**. The Partner will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receipt and respond to the complainant again within 20 working days to advise of the outcome. This stage provides an opportunity for the Partner to review the action taken to date and the decision reached. It also provides an opportunity for first time complaints of a serious nature to be heard at a senior management level. The Partner may use the services of an independent person to interview individuals and produce a report.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Partner's response then they may **Appeal** to an **Independent Advisor** who has both counselling and training experience and is approved by COSCA. The complainant should communicate an intention to appeal within 10 working days following receipt

of the Partner's response. The Independent Advisor will acknowledge the complaint in writing within **five working days** of receipt. The Partner will make available all records relating to the complaint to allow the independent advisor to consider the Appeal. A full response of the outcome of this appeal will be conveyed to complainant orally and/or in writing within twenty working days of receipt.

Details of findings from both the **Formal & Appeal** stage of the process will include the following:

- Details of the investigation
- A decision on whether the complaint was/is upheld or not
- The organisation's offer of redress, (if complaint is upheld) e.g. an apology
- Any other action that will be taken as a result of the investigation
- If it has not been possible to complete the investigation within 20 days, the reasons why and the expected completion date

Recording Complaints

The organisation will keep the following record for every formal complaint received. These records will be held in a confidential environment and will include the following information:

The date the complaint was received

- Name and address of complainant
- Form of complaint
- Description and nature of complaint
- Who received the complaint
- Actions taken
- Copies of all correspondence

The Grounded Learning Partnership is an Organisational Member of COSCA (see below for details). The results of any formal complaints against the organisation in relation to its Counselling Training Activities will also be submitted to COSCA using the **Report to COSCA at Conclusion of Complaint Proceedings** pro-forma.

Getting Further Support

If you are unhappy with the results of the Complaints Procedure you may wish to pursue the matter with one of the organisations listed below:

COSCA
16 Melville Terrace,
Stirling
FK8 2NE
Telephone: 01786 475140

Citizens Advice
www.citizensadvice.org.uk