



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



As customers are deemed always right, no matter what the circumstances, complaints have to be dealt with in a standard procedure, in order to maintain Protocols' good image and good product quality, as well as a fully satisfied customer. A complaint is a statement in which you express your dissatisfaction with a particular situation.



Department
for Education



TPSL t/a PROTOCOL CONSULTANCY SERVICES

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



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Aim

Protocols' aim is to improve the quality of all that they do by establishing effective systems for handling feedback and complaints from

- ✓ **Learners (Apprentices and Trainees)**
- ✓ **Employers**
- ✓ **Funding bodies**
- ✓ **External agencies**
- ✓ **Other interested parties i.e. training provider partners**
- ✓ **Customers hiring rooms and external exams etc**

Objectives

The objectives are to ensure that feedback and complaints systems are:-

- **Accessible**
Well publicised and easy to access, simple to understand and demonstrate willingness to act.
- **Thorough**
Dealing with each point raised, with a full procedure for investigations and appeals
- **Prompt**
With fixed time limits for action and keeping people informed of progress
- **Effective**
With sufficient independence to provide reassurance, sensitive enough to pick up relevant information to enable lessons to be learnt from mistakes
- **Monitored**
On a regular basis to make sure that the systems are effective and analyses are undertaken of the numbers and types of complaints received to provide early warning of emerging issues and trends
- **Reviewed**
To inform continuous improvements in the service provided

Complaint Procedure

As customers are deemed always right, no matter what the circumstances, complaints have to be dealt with in a standard procedure, in order to maintain Protocols' good image and good product quality, as well as a fully satisfied customer. A complaint is a statement in which you express your dissatisfaction with a particular situation.

When dealing with complaints, good communication skills and courtesy is essential, therefore, when starting with the Protocol group, staff will be trained in these areas, as well as, on the procedure of how to deal with complaints. This training will be carried out when commencing work with Protocol Consultancy Services and it will be on an ongoing basis where possible. All complaints should be dealt with in private, so as not to disturb others. The standard procedure is as follows:

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- All complaints should be given equal status.
- All written complaints must be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- Complaints should be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Complaints received should be monitored regularly to highlight early warning of emerging issues and to ensure that corrective action is having the desired effect.
- When a complaint arises, Protocol staff will confirm the complaints process and will always show sympathy towards the customer.
- Protocol staff will always listen to the customer, and never interrupt the customer whilst he/she is putting forward the complaint.
- Open, and not closed, questions must be asked to obtain full and accurate facts.
- By interviewing the complainant, the facts information and data of the complaint will be established. These facts will be recorded on the Confidential Record Form or complaints form as appropriate.
- Once the facts have been established, an agreement will be put forward as to what course of action is to be taken. This course of action will be acceptable to both Protocol staff and the customer. It is essential that this action is acted upon immediately.
- The customer will be kept fully informed, at all times, as to what is happening with the complaint. This will be carried out by contacting the customer via post, e mail or by phoning in a formal, clear, unambiguous, and courteous manner.
- All complaint paper work will be completed, filed and put forward to the relevant people and to the Managing Director - Sue Tipton.
- Any complainants are not to be victimised or discriminated against.

All Protocol staff will be solution minded and they will tell the customer what the course of action is and start acting upon the complaint. The customer will be shown that the Protocol Group is concerned and anxious in putting things right and that he/she is our number one priority.

Bullying and Harassment of Learners

All learners are issued a Protocol Learner Handbook during their induction programme. This Handbook contains details of the Protocol complaints procedure.

Attention is given during induction to highlight the procedure for learners suffering bullying or harassment.

What to do about a report of bullying/harassment: -

- Don't ignore it.
- Investigate the allegation.
- Keep the bullied or harassed person informed of what you are doing.

- Resolve the situation clearly and decisively, and so that the bullied/harassed person does not feel punished in any way.
- Make it clear that bullying/harassment will not be tolerated. The bullied/harassed person's rights: -
 - To tell about being bullied/harassed without being penalised.
 - To be listened to sympathetically.
 - To have a person in authority investigate incidents and act on what is discovered.
 - To get feedback as soon as possible.
 - To have the bully/harasser made aware of what their behaviour has done to the bullied/harassed person.

Full details of any reported incidents are to be made on the Learner Confidential Record Form, and logged on the equal opportunities issue log with outcomes and details of any actions taken or further action required.

Staff should also be aware of the Safeguarding Policy requirements and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

Interview Guidelines

The key to solving the customer's complaint is to conduct a full and thorough interview with the complainant to obtain full details of the nature of the complaint and possible solutions. Guidelines of how to approach the interview are listed below: -

- Put the customer first.
- Make the customer feel at ease.
- Make the customer feel important
- Put yourself in the customers' shoes.
- Treat all customers equally... show that they are valued.
- Give customers your time and full attention and your name.
- Enjoy helping the customer and resolving the problem.
- Ensure that your attitude is appropriate for the customer.
- Find out what would make the customer fully satisfied.
- Ensure that what you give the customer is right for them.
- Keep the customer informed.
- Take responsibility, don't just pass the buck.
- Achieve 'win: win' results when people complain.

- Practice honest and fair treatment.
- Customer complaints are treated with a positive approach in order to learn from them.
- Act calm, cool and confident.
- Show that you respect and accept the customer regardless of race, sex, culture, age, disability etc.
- Always be polite/friendly/ interested.
- Always maintain eye contact.
- Always be motivated as customers can spot disinterest.
- Whilst questioning and listening – ask and then make notes and complete complaint form if necessary
- Do not make promises you cannot deliver
- Escalate to someone senior if you cannot resolve

Protocol Staff Training Objectives

Training Objectives

- The importance of motivation
- Evaluation - self and customers
- Customer buying power
- Effective communication
- The value of Assessment

Providing good customer care gives a company a competitive edge. Customer care is a real professional skill; therefore Protocol staff must undergo training in how to deal with complaints, which includes the following:-

- Each individual will receive a copy of the complaint procedure and the relevant forms and or Confidential Record Form etc.
- Effective communication skills - speech and choice of words.
- Good listening habits e.g. listening 'between the lines'
- Professional telephone skills.
- How to deal with an angry customer - the do's and don'ts.
- Don't blame someone else/another department - the customer is not at fault, they just want results.
- Don't make promises that cannot be kept just to take the heat out of the situation as this makes things worse in the long run.
- The complaint is about the product/service and not about you personally.
- Don't give a flat 'No' - whenever possible always offer an alternative.
- Don't pass the customer on to someone else - take personal responsibility for helping them if you are able to.

- Staff are trained in recognising the wants and needs of customers - a happy customer usually turns into a loyal customer.
- Staff are trained to look after the customer and know what products/services that are provided.
- They are also trained as regard to body language as this can have a negative effect especially where first impressions are concerned.
- Most importantly Protocol staff are trained in 'how to solve customer problems'

Assessment & RPL Appeals Procedure

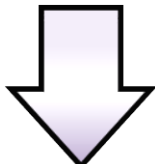
If you, as an interested party, (learner, employer, professional or awarding organisation) are concerned about any decision, which affects your position or progress towards obtaining your qualification, you have the right of appeal.

The grounds for such an appeal could be regarding:

1. Achievement of competence
2. Recognition of prior learning

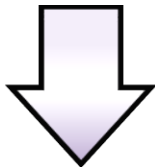
(Lack of, or unclear, feedback from Training Advisor/Assessor. Misjudged or misinterpretation of vital information.)

LEARNER



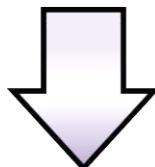
Appeals must be made either verbally or in writing within 2 working days from assessment to your Training Adviser or IQA at Protocol on 0121 236 2634 and must indicate the points of disagreement and reasons.

TRAINING ADVISER



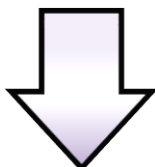
To log/record appeal details and action plan it. If appeal cannot be resolved pass on to the next stage within 5 working days

IQA



To log/record appeal details and action plan it. If appeal cannot be resolved pass on to the next stage within 5 working days

APPEALS PANEL



The appeals panel will need to make an appropriate decision based on the evidence presented and their decision is final. This process may take up to 14 days to arrange

If you feel unable to discuss your appeal with your Training Adviser you can speak directly to the IQA (Internal Quality Assurer responsible for your qualification)

Note: The appeals panel will consist of an IQA, EQA (of the Awarding Organisation), Training Adviser and Director who have not been involved. This will be the final route of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal appeals procedure then please contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Should you address your appeal to the Awarding Organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome you may then raise your appeal to the relevant qualification regulator. Please also see the Awarding Organisations web site and their appeals procedure. The details can also be found on our Web site

See below for a list of Awarding Organisations:

Highfield Qualifications - 0845 2260350 - www.highfieldqualifications.com

ILM – 01543 266867 - <https://www.i-l-m.com>

City and Guilds - 020 7294 8444 - <https://www.cityandguilds.com>

TQUK - 03333583344- <https://www.tquk.org>

Ist for EPA 01642 205207 <https://1stforepa.co.uk/>

Copy of Customer Complaints Procedure

Protocols' aim is to improve the quality of all that we do, by establishing effective systems for handling feedback and complaints.

You, as a customer, are deemed always right, no matter what the circumstances. Our main aim is to maintain our high quality image and reputation and to ensure that you are completely satisfied as one of our valued customers. Your complaint will be dealt with by a standard procedure which has been set up by the Protocol Group.

If received, all complaints will be given equal status and will be dealt with promptly. All complaints will be recorded on a Confidential Record Form or complaints form. Once the facts have been established, we will put forward what action is to be taken that is suitable for you and us. This will be acted on immediately and you will be kept informed at all times as to what is happening to your complaint. We guarantee to acknowledge a written complaint within 5 working days of receipt and investigate and respond promptly. We aim to resolve all complaints with 14 days of the complaint being received.

We are solution minded, and anxious to put things right, especially if dissatisfaction or misunderstanding occur.

If you have any views of our work, whether good or bad:-



You can write to us



You can telephone us



You can visit us



You can email us

You could ask someone else to speak to us on your behalf, if you prefer.

Contact details:

The Old Guild

House 1 New

Market Street

Birmingham

B3 2NH

Tel: 0121 236 2634

Email: contactus@protocolgroup.org.uk

Interview Form

Form to be completed during interview			
<u>Reminder</u> - Please read interview guidelines prior to commencing the interview			
Name of customer		Date of complaint	
Time of complaint:			
Nature of complaint:			
Place of complaint:			
Complaint received by:			
Complaint actioned by:			
Complaint received written/verbally:			
Notes/Comments:			

Customer Complaint Form

To be completed after the interview and filed in the appropriate confidential records	
Name:	
Date:	

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Location:					
Complaint received by:					
Complaint actioned by:					
<u>Complaint details/facts</u>					
<u>Customers' reaction and feelings at the time of complaint</u>					
<u>Complaint up date</u>					
<u>Action taken</u>					
<u>Customers' response to action taken</u>					
Staff Name		Signature		Date	
Director Name		Signature		Date	
Date complaint resolved:					

Policy published date	August 2010
Date of last review	May 25
Next review due	May 2026
Person responsible for policy and review	Sue Tipton