

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY

Policy Statement

1. Community Links is committed to ensuring that its work is of the highest quality. Feedback from learners, partners, funders and other interested parties is integral to the continual improvement of our provision. Complaints and compliments:
 - Tell us what is working
 - Help identify potential service problems
 - Help identify and manage risks
 - Highlight opportunities for improvement
2. This policy aims to provide a straightforward and consistent process to how we listen and respond.

Principles

3. Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:
 - Complaints and compliments are an important part of feedback we receive. It is integral to our approach that we seek and respond to feedback.
 - Our procedures are accessible and easy to understand. Our website will include our complaints procedure
 - Complaints are dealt with appropriately and investigated within agreed time frames
 - Making a complaint will not prejudice the service being provided to the complainant
 - Community Links will learn from complaints and compliments and will use the information to continually improve
4. The Complaints and Feedback Policy covers how Community Links and its Partners manage complaints received from its customers and learners. It is expected that all Partners and employees will understand and adhere to this policy when conducting Community Links Training and Enterprises Ltd (Community Links) business. This policy can be accessed via Community Links Sharepoint, their HR system and the company website. It is updated annually unless otherwise required by statute or accrediting body.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Customer	An individual or organisation utilising any of the services provided by Community Links and/or its Partners. This includes, but is not limited to, learners enrolled on programmes with Partners, their parents should they be aged 16-18, and their employers. Staff employed by Partners may also use this policy to complain about any aspect of Community Links' provision.
Complaint	A complaint is identified when a customer expresses dissatisfaction regarding provision of a service delivered by Community Links or through of its Partners.

Complaints Procedure

5. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided by Community Links. We take all complaints extremely seriously and all staff are trained and committed to rectify any problem as soon as it is brought to their attention. It is recognised that a customer who has a complaint dealt with to their complete satisfaction is likely to become a repeat customer. Our procedure has three stages:

Stage 1 – Informal

- To make an initial complaint, please bring this to our attention as soon as possible by speaking or emailing the individual concerned or their manager. Please include as much detail as possible
- We will endeavour to satisfy your complaint and let you know of any action to be taken.
- All complaints will be acknowledged by the member of staff you contacted within 5 working days
- We will respond to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days

Stage 2 – Formal

- Should your stage 1 complaint fail to provide you with a satisfactory resolution, or you feel it is inappropriate to address your complaint informally, please submit your complaint formally in writing to:
 - Community Links Training & Enterprise Ltd, Peel House, Skelmersdale WN8 9PT or info@mycommunitylinks.com
- When you contact us, please give us:
 - Your full name, contact details, and include a daytime telephone number
 - A full description of your complaint (including the subject matter and dates and times if known);
 - Names of any of the people you have dealt with so far; and
 - Copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint.
- Community Links ask that you raise your complaint as soon as possible after the event so that we have the opportunity to investigate fully.
- We will investigate your complaint and respond to you within 10 working days.
- In more complex cases, where the complaint may take longer than 10 working days to investigate and resolve the issue, the customer will still be notified within 10 working days of any progress made to date, the reason for the delay and the revised timescale. This notification will either be in writing or via email.

Stage 3 - Appealing

- In the unlikely event you remain unhappy after your complaint has been investigated and a decision reached then you may escalate your complaint to our Director.
- Please include any further items for consideration and state clearly why you remain unhappy with the decision taken so far.
- The Director will investigate in full and respond to you within 15 working days
- The Director can be contacted via the address or email above.
- This will be the final route of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal complaints procedure and your complaint refers to services you have received relating to an accredited qualification course

then please contact the Awarding Organisation directly; Community Links staff will provide you with the contact details of the awarding organisation.

- If you feel you have followed all the Awarding Body Complaints procedure you still have the right to escalate your complaint to the relevant qualification regulator.

General points

6. **Queries.** If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact Community Links Training on 01744 733711 or via info@mycommunitylinks.com
7. **Safeguarding.** If your complaint raises safeguarding concerns, the issue will be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or our Deputy DSL. This may result in a delay to the complaint being investigated.
8. **Record keeping.** Community Links will keep a record of all complaints. The following details will be documented about each complaint received:
 - Name of the customer raising the complaint, and basic details regarding the complainant to enable monitoring under equalities legislation.
 - Date on which the complaint was received, and the date on which a response was provided.
 - Nature of the complaint.
 - Details of the investigation conducted.
 - Resolution provided.
 - Whether the complaint is closed (where the customer is satisfied with the resolution) or remains open (where they remain dissatisfied and wish a further investigation to take place or an alternative resolution to be provided)
9. Collating this information, Community Links will maintain records on the following:
 - Number and nature of complaints
 - Dates complaints received and dates of responses.
 - Performance in meeting the timescales.
 - Outcome of complaints at each stage i.e. upheld, not upheld, resolved etc.
 - Level of customer satisfaction with the way the complaint has been handled.
 - Any trends in complaints relating to Equality & Diversity impact measures
 - Records of complaints form a basis from which we will strive to improve the services

Compliments

10. Compliments also provide valuable feedback about what is working well. Compliments are usually received as follows:
 - **Informal.** Learners, partners, funders and the public contact one of our staff direct. Sometimes, a manager or Director receives a compliment about a service or a staff member, these will always be passed on to the staff member.
 - **Learner feedback.** Where learners specifically name a staff member in their feedback, we pass this on to that staff member.

Learner feedback

11. We proactively seek learner feedback including through surveys. All feedback is valued and used as part of our continuous improvement. We recognise that sometimes learners will not make a complaint or provide a compliment in line with the above procedures but they may score an aspect of our service in such a way that we determine it is praise or a concern about our service.

Version Control

Version history	Content Changed
1 – Sep 2024	Policy produced
2 – 25 October 2025	Policy reviewed and lay out of procedure made more simple to follow Paragraphs numbered
3- 22 October 2026	Policy agreed

Review and Ratification

Next Review Date	Reason for Review
October 2027	Annual review