


Complaints and Appeals Policy

Responsibility:	Simon Little, Managing Director	Date doc. created:	V3 February 2022
Print name sign off:	Simon Little	Last review date of doc:	March 2023
Signature:		Next review date:	March 2024

Best Practice Network is committed to ensuring that its practices are fair and transparent, conducted according to agreed policies and procedures. Best Practice Network has adopted the following appeals and complaints policy. No apprentice, applicant or candidate shall be prejudiced or disadvantaged by using this policy.

This document is for the use of:

- Candidates, Trainees and Apprentices
- Parents, guardians and/or carers on behalf of students under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults
- Suppliers
- Employers' criticality

Complaints

A complaint is defined as:

Any expression of dissatisfaction with Best Practice Network, with a member of staff, or with a Best Practice Network Associate or Partner that requires a formal response.

A complaint may be about:

- The administration of an application
- The training and support received whilst on the programme
- The assessment process
- A perception that a Best Practice Network or national policy or relevant legal requirement has not been correctly implemented or adhered to when dealing with an application or candidate.

It is important to establish the difference between a concern (an informal complaint) and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage reduces the likelihood of them developing into formal complaints.

Concerns should be raised with a member of staff or their manager as soon as possible, so they can quickly understand your concerns and try to put things right.

If the response to the concern is not satisfactory, a formal complaint can be made using the procedure below.

Appeals

An appeal is defined as

- A request for reconsideration of a decision to reject an application or remove (withdraw) a candidate from the programme. Should a rejected applicant or a withdrawn candidate consider that either:
 - Best Practice Network has not adhered to its own policies or procedures or is in breach of any national policies or relevant legal requirements: or
 - There is evidence of bias or prejudice against the applicant/candidate
- A request for reconsideration of a 'Not Met' outcome of summative assessment based on the view of the candidate that either:
- Best Practice Network has not adhered to its own marking policy or process
 - the mark scheme has not been correctly applied
 - there is evidence of bias or prejudice against the applicant/candidate

How to make a complaint/ appeal

If the complainant is an employer, please discuss the matter with one of the following:

- The apprentice's Tutor
- The Apprenticeships Director

An applicant/candidate/ apprentice wishing to lodge a complaint or appeal should email or write to:

chrisgarcia@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk

Chris Garcia
Head of Quality & Compliance
Best Practice Network
Newminster House
27-29 Baldwin Street
Bristol
BS1 1LT

Complaints or appeals will only be considered from the applicant/ candidate/ apprentice concerned and not from any third party unless under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult.

An applicant/candidate wishing to make a complaint should do so within 21 days of the matter with which the complaint is concerned following unsatisfactory resolution of their concerns.

An applicant/candidate wishing to lodge an appeal should do so within 21 days of the date of the communication, informing them of the decision on their application/withdrawal.

Procedure

Customer complaints and appeals must be brought immediately to the attention of the Head of Quality and Compliance and the appropriate Programme Director.

Once the Head of Quality & Compliance is aware of the complaint or appeal, they shall:

- Add details of the complaint or appeal to the BPN Complaints/ Appeals Log
- Acknowledge the complaint or appeal to the sender in writing within 24 hours of receipt - giving an indication of how long an investigation into the complaint will take.
- Investigate the complaint or appeal
- Keep the complainant/ individual appealing and relevant Programme Director and Coordinator up to date with progress throughout the process
- Communicate the outcome of the complaint or appeal to the complainant/ individual appealing and the relevant Programme Director

If the complaint has occurred due to a BPN error, supplier error or poor service, the matter is brought to the attention of the Programme Director (as appropriate) who decide upon the appropriate action.

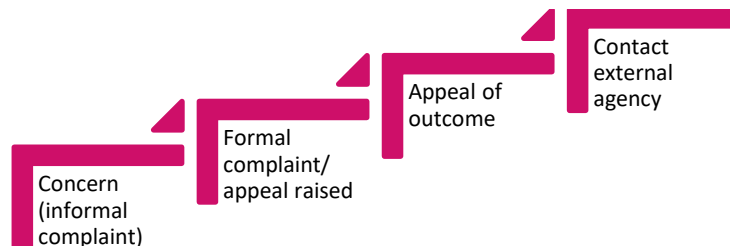
BPN will investigate the complaint or review an appeal and aim to take any necessary action to resolve the situation within 20 working days. If this is not going to be possible, the reason for the delay, along with an appropriate target date for resolution must be provided to the complainant or individual appealing.

The complainant/ individual appealing has a further right of appeal to Managing Director should they still feel that the problem has not been dealt with satisfactorily.

Complaints, appeals and customer feedback are included in monthly programme reports and reviewed at senior management level also on a monthly basis.

Any training needs that are highlighted as a result of complaints or appeals are addressed immediately.

The escalation route of complaints/ appeals is summarised in the figure below-



Outcomes of complaints / appeals

Complaints

The investigation of a complaint will result in either the complaint being rejected or upheld wholly or in part. Should a complaint be rejected, the applicant or candidate will be informed accordingly with a statement as to why the complaint has been rejected.

If the investigation determines that the complaint be upheld in whole or in part, an apology will be issued to the applicant/candidate/apprentice. Should the findings suggest that changes to procedures or policies are appropriate; this will be stated in any correspondence to the applicant.

Appeals

Should the investigation establish that a decision to reject or withdraw, or an assessment outcome of 'not met' was made in breach of any Best Practice Network policy or procedure, any national policy or law, or if there is evidence of bias or prejudice against the applicant, or incorrect application of the mark scheme, the application/ candidate's place or outcome will be reconsidered.

Should the reconsideration result in a decision to admit the applicant/ re-engage the candidate (subject to any conditions being met), but at such a time in the cycle that the original entry point is not possible, a suitable alternative entry point will be offered.

Should the investigation determine that the original decision be upheld, the applicant/candidate will be informed accordingly with a statement as to why the appeal has been rejected.

Further consideration and escalation

Should an applicant or trainee be dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal or complaint, they can escalate the issue by writing to the Programme Director stating the reasons for their dissatisfaction and the outcome they were seeking. The Programme Director, in conjunction with the Managing Director, will investigate the appeal or complaint.

The decision of the Programme Director and the Managing Director is final. Once this decision has been communicated to the applicant, no further correspondence will be entered into regarding this application/ withdrawal from the programme.

For Apprentices and Employers, Best Practice Network hope that once all stages of the complaint process have been exhausted, we will have satisfactorily resolved any complaints. On some occasions this may not be the case and if the complainant is still not satisfied with the resolution offered they may correspond with an external agency, a government funding agency or an awarding organisation but in general external agencies would look to Best Practice Network to complete internal processes and seek a satisfactory resolution to the issue in the first instance.

ESFA Apprenticeship Service Support

08000 150 600

helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

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