

# Complaints Policy and Process

## Introduction

&Evolve (And Evolve Ltd) is committed to providing a quality service for all clients, learners and apprentices, working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders and partners.

We are committed to investigating all complaints promptly, in order to determine their validity, cause, effect and the opportunity for future prevention.

We value all feedback, including complaints in order to evaluate our performance and in order to make quality improvements.

Our complaints procedure is designed to differentiate between issues, which are capable of being dealt with on an informal basis, and more serious complaints, which will require more in-depth investigation and will need to be dealt with in accordance with the formal complaints process. The procedure is not in place for the purpose of challenging assessment decisions, in this instance the appeals procedures should be followed.

### **And Evolve's responsibility will be to:**

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- respond within a stated period of time.
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- take action where appropriate.

### **A complainant's responsibility is to:**

- bring their complaint, in writing, to And Evolve's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising.
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff at And Evolve
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- allow And Evolve a reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond And Evolve's control.

### **Responsibility for Action: All Staff of And Evolve**

### **What is a complaint?**

We consider complaints as expression(s) of dissatisfaction regarding our actions, services, and the application of our policies and / or on occasion, the outcome or decision we have made.

In particular, when considering complaints, we examine whether they relate to the following on our part (our complaints criteria):

- mistakes or poor service
- unreasonable delay or failure to take action
- unprofessional behaviour or conduct
- bias or unfair treatment
- failure to follow our published policies or procedures without a reasonable explanation.

### **Frivolous, meritless or vexatious complaints**

We will treat every complaint fairly.

We will not engage with frivolous, meritless or vexatious complaints. We will not accept persistent and repeated contacts from complainants, without being presented with new information or evidence. These types of interactions reduce the amount of time that we can dedicate to delivering our services.

### **How we deal with complaints**

We aim to resolve all accepted complaints as quickly as possible, within 10 working days of receipt. Where this is not possible, we will take a staged approach to complaint escalation and resolution.

Stage 1 of our Complaints Policy is classed as an informal stage. Complaints escalated to Stage 2 are classed as a formal complaint.

Please see each stage below for information on how complaints will be addressed.

### **Stages of a Complaint**

#### **Stage 1: Informal – initial complaint**

Initial (Stage 1) complaints should be raised in person to Amy Billings either in person, by phone or by email.

The complainant can expect a resolution to the complaint within **10 working days** of receipt.

#### **Outlining your complaint**

The following information will help us in understanding the reason for your dissatisfaction:

- the nature of the complaint (what happened)
- the date(s) the issue you are complaining about came to your attention (when it happened)
- the impact / effects of the issue (what was the result)

Where we consider a complaint to be unspecific, excessively long and / or complex, we may require a written summary of the key aspects of your complaint, to make sure we understand the points to be covered.

## **Stage 2: Formal – escalation to the Managing Director**

Where it has not been possible for us to resolve the complaint at Stage 1, we will escalate it to the Managing Director who will action and resolve the complaint within **10 working days**.

Any Stage 2 complaints must be submitted in writing, within **5 working days** of the Stage 1 outcome being given. Information must be provided as to why they believe the complaint has not been resolved and / or properly addressed.

The Managing Director will determine whether we have applied our procedures fairly, appropriately, consistently and in line with our policy.

We will inform the complainant in writing of the decision within **1 working day** of the decision being made.

## **Exceptions to stated timescales**

The timescales relating to each stage of the complaints process are outlined above. Please note that in some cases, particularly where the complaint may be complex, the complaint may take longer than the stated working days to investigate and / or resolve. In such instances, we will advise you of the reasons why and of the revised timescale.

## **Outcome of a complaint**

If we uphold the complaint, we will tell the complainant what remedy we propose. The remedy chosen will be proportionate and appropriate to the issue being complained about and may include:

- an apology
- an explanation of any poor service you have received
- an explanation of how a matter has been or may be rectified
- recommendations to change or improve our processes or procedures.

## **Confidentiality**

We may need to access confidential information. We will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the purposes of the investigation and in line with relevant data protection legislation. We will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so, e.g. to our Regulators and / the Police or other relevant and / or Statutory Bodies.

This document is available on our website at: [www.and-evolve.com/complaints-policy](http://www.and-evolve.com/complaints-policy)