

Active Lancashire Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1. Our Aim

Active Lancashire is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.

We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.

We aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible.
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures
- resolve informal concerns quickly and keep matters low- key, where possible
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

Initially complaints can be made in person or in writing in the following ways:-

In writing to:-

**Active Lancashire,
Farington House,
Lancashire Business Park,
Centurion Way,
Leyland,
PR26 6TW**

Email: via the Project Lead for the area of the complaint or Finance and

HR Administration Officer, Donna Brennand:

Email: dbrennand@activelancashire.org.uk Tel:- 01772 299838

2. Definitions

Compliment

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

Complaint

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however, it is expressed.

This would include complaints expressed *face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method.*

All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “*expression of dissatisfaction*” even when the word “*complain*” or “*complaint*” is not used.

Complainant

A complainant is defined as the party who makes the complaint.

This could include multiple individuals making a collective complaint.

3. Compliments Purpose

Active Lancashire are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer.

All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to provide feedback to the member of staff or service.

4. Complaints Purpose

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction.

Where someone is not satisfied with the services we offer we welcome feedback; whether formally by way of the complaint procedure or informally. Feedback will help Active Lancashire improve our service and deal with mistakes efficiently.

5. Responsibilities

Active Lancashire’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

The complainant’s responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing to Active Lancashire's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in Active Lancashire
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
- Allow Active Lancashire a reasonable time to deal with the matter and recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Active Lancashire's control

6. Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Active Lancashire maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts), particularly where this may constitute a Safeguarding issue. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

7. Complaints Procedure.

Please note that Active Lancashire has its own Disciplinary Procedure for members of staff to raise internal complaints.
If you are a member of staff, please refer to this document.

There is also a separate Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure for Active Lancashire Training Centre learners.

<https://www.activelancashire.org.uk/projects/training-centre>

Written records must be made by Active Lancashire at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. As an example, this may include mediation between the complainant and those named in the complaint, led by Active Lancashire Lead Safeguarding Officer Jayne Wilson

If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the individual should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them.

It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a member of the Management Team to make this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing the attached form (Appendix 1) should be used. If verbally, a statement should be taken by a member of the Safeguarding Management Team, staff member or a supervisor and the form should be populated on the complainant's behalf.
- b) This should then be checked with the complainant(s) to ensure all of the main points have been covered.
- c) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to the appropriate Operations Manager for the relevant project/team. In the event of a complaint about the Operations Manager the complaint should be passed to the Director of Operations, and if the complaint is about the Director of Operations this must be passed on to the Chief Executive.
- d) The appropriate manager or Director of Operations, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
- e) One of the above will investigate the complaint. Depending on the complexity/severity of the complaint it may be appropriate to convene a panel to investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager where the complaint refers to a specific staff member of Active Lancashire.
- f) The complainant will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter/email must be sent explaining why. The investigating officer(s) should complete the outcome form as part of their response.

Stage 3

- a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision then they should submit and Appeal against this decision via the Appeals form and a sub-group of the Trustee Board will be convened to investigate.
It should be noted that appeals can only be submitted for certain reasons outlined in the outcome form. Simply disagreeing with the outcome may not be considered a valid reason for submitting an appeal.
- b) The complaint and all supporting documentation will be passed to Safeguarding Lead officer, who will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, examine files/notes. They will respond within four weeks in writing. Their decision will be final.

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Active Lancashire Complaint Form

To be completed by the complainant(s) or by the investigating officer(s) on the complainant's behalf

Use this form to explain the details of your complaint. Your complaint should be submitted to the relevant project lead (unless they are implicated in said complaint) no later than 8 weeks after your concerns first arose.

You must provide evidence to support your complaint and you should include the evidence when you submit this form.

If you have any technical problems with this form, include all information as a text file in Word or in the body of an email.

Please read the Complaint and Compliments Policy and Procedure document before submitting your complaint. By sending us your complaint, you are confirming you have read and understood the policy and procedure.

Your Name		Date	
Project/Team Name *subject of the complaint			
In order to contact you we will use your email address you have provided. If this is a complaint made by a group, give the name of <u>one</u> agreed point of contact.		Point of contact for Group Complaints:	
Complaint relates to: Please provide brief outline e.g. Staff conduct			
Do you have a disability or specific learning difficulty you would like us to be aware of when considering your complaint?	Yes / No If yes, please give details of adjustments that will assist you during the complaint procedure.		
Have you already attempted to resolve your concerns? If yes, include details below.			Yes / No
Details of informal complaint steps:			
Details about your complaint: NB: You must include all information/evidence with this form. Explain your concern, when they happened, how they have impacted on you. List any documents included to support your complaint, if applicable.			
Is there a specific remedy or redress that you would like the investigator to consider, if your complaint is upheld? (Requested remedy will be considered where all or part of the complaint is upheld. Remedy is at the discretion of the complaint investigator and is not guaranteed).			
Signed: (complainant) If multiple complainants, the agreed point of contact should sign the document on the group's behalf		Date:	

Appendix 2: Outcome Form

Active Lancashire Complaint Outcome Form

To be completed by the investigating officer(s)

This form contains the outcome of a complaint submitted to Active Lancashire, as determined by the investigating officer/panel.

Should you have any questions about the contents of this outcome document please contact the lead investigating officer.

Should you wish to challenge the outcome of the complaint by means of the appeal process, instructions on how to do so are at the end of this document.

Name of complainant(s) If multiple, please indicate who is the agreed point of contact		Date of receipt of complaint	
Name of investigating officer(s) If multiple, please indicate who is the agreed lead investigating officer		Date of completion of outcome	

Complaint summary & initial steps taken

Please summarise the main points of the complaint and include any details about what steps were taken in the process e.g. interviews, evidence gathering

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Evidence received by:

Interviews held with:

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Point One: [summary of point e.g. Bullying]

If there are multiple points to be considered, please create a separate outcome section for each point

Outcome: [Upheld, Partially Upheld, Not Upheld]

In the box below please include a brief summary of how the outcome was reached e.g. lack of evidence

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Actions to be taken/learning outcome

In the box below please include a brief summary of what actions will be taken as a result of the outcome and any additional learning/feedback that can be taken from the complaint

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If you do accept the outcome of the complaint:
Please respond to the lead investigating officer with a signed copy of the outcome document. If we do not hear from you within 7 days of the email being sent we will consider the complaint closed.
If you do not accept the outcome of the complaint:
You have the right to challenge the outcome on one of the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was not investigated thoroughly and/or evidence submitted was ignored or overlooked • It was investigated with bias or unfair process • You have new evidence to support your complaint, which was not available at the time of the complaint investigation being undertaken. <p>Please note, the outcome itself cannot be challenged by way of an appeal.</p> <p>Should an appeal be submitted you would be required to provide evidence to support your reason for the appeal. Should you wish to submit an appeal for one of the reasons listed above please do so in response to the outcome email within 7 days.</p> <p>If an appeal is received within 7 days all notes and evidentiary documents from the complaint process will be handed over to a new investigating officer(s) who will conduct their own investigation into the handling of the complaint. This may include speaking to those already interviewed as part of the complaint process.</p> <p>The new investigating officer(s) will then make a decision as to whether the original complaint investigation was conducted properly.</p> <p><i>Please note that as well as a copy of the outcome document being sent to the complainant, a copy will also be sent to the individuals named as the subject of the complaint and to any other investigating officers.</i></p>

(Lead) Investigating Officer to complete	
By signing this document, I the investigating officer/we the investigating officers agree to the contents of the complaint outcome and agree to the outcome being sent to the complainant.	
If there are more than one investigating officer please ensure each officer signs the document by adding in additional rows below.	
Investigating Officer	[insert name]
Signature	[insert signature]
Date	[insert date]

Complainant to complete	
By signing this document, the complainant accepts the outcome of the complaint and thereby agrees that the complaint can be drawn to a close following any actions outlined in the document.	
If there are multiple complainants, the main point of contact can sign the document on behalf of the group.	
If you do not agree with the outcome of the complaint, you can proceed with the appeals process as described above.	
If we do not have a response to the outcome within 7 days, the complaint will be drawn to a close.	
Complainant	[insert name]
Signature	[insert signature]
Date	[insert date]

