



# **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

January 2019  
(Version 1.1)

## 1.0 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF POLICY

Northern Regeneration is committed to providing a professional and efficient service to its customers. Northern Regeneration welcomes feedback whether it is congratulations, criticism or constructive suggestions. The complaints policy applies to all services that Northern Regeneration provides and is available to learners, former learners, apprentices, employers and members of public.

The Policy and its associated procedures are designed to define Northern Regeneration's open approach to praise and criticism of the full range of services it provides and to describe the procedures for reporting them.

## 2.0 OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Northern Regeneration will investigate a complaint from an anonymous source, when a substantial risk is identified, whilst recognising that it may not be possible to collect all relevant information for investigating such complaints and respond accordingly.

### **Confidentiality**

Where possible, confidentiality will be observed, throughout the operation of this policy. Where a complaint relates to specific individuals, Northern Regeneration may seek permission to share such details with them. If permission is not given, it may not be possible to fully investigate or resolve the complaint. Northern Regeneration will only disclose information to those who need to investigate the complaint, or to respond to any issues raised.

### **Vexatious and Malicious Complaints**

A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is deemed unreasonable or untrue, having been put forward so as to abuse the complaints procedure, or an attempt to defame the name or character of another person. In cases where a complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious, Northern Regeneration reserves the right to terminate investigation of the complaint.

### **Permission to Disclose**

If the complainant wishes for someone else to raise concerns with us on their behalf, Northern Regeneration has a legal obligation under the General Data Protection Regulation with regard to sharing information with third parties. Northern Regeneration will require written permission to share this information with them.

**Before** permission is given to share the information with others, the complainant must consider whether our response will include any sensitive information about them. The complainant is required to contact us in advance to tell us which sensitive information we can and cannot share.

### **Multi-Issue Complaints**

If a complaint identifies a number of issues which fall within the remit of other procedures the content of such complaints will be reviewed. The complainant will then be notified and directed to the relevant policy and procedure.

### **Collective/group complaints**

Collective/group complaints are expected to identify how each individual has been personally affected by the issues which are being brought to the attention of Northern Regeneration. Each individual named in the collective complaint must agree with the content of the complaint before it is submitted and individually sign to say that they are in agreement of the same. Only the nominated spokesperson will receive communication/correspondence from Northern Regeneration.

### **Complaints by a third party**

Complaints made by a third party (eg parent or guardian) on behalf of a learner will only be considered if a signed statement is received from the learner confirming their agreement.

### **Complaints about staff members**

Where a complaint is made about a specific member of staff, the member of staff shall have the right to access and respond to any evidence provided. If it is determined that the matter should be investigated under staff disciplinary procedures, the complaints procedure shall be suspended until the disciplinary matter has been concluded.

Northern Regeneration operates a stage complaint procedure.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – see also Appendix A**

Northern Regeneration strives to provide the best quality learning and services that meet or exceed the expectations of our learners and users. Northern Regeneration promotes a culture that is responsive to feedback, whether complimentary or critical. Comments about our services are actively encouraged and acknowledged as a valuable source of information that we can evaluate and use to improve the quality of provision to learners, other users and partners/stakeholders. Learners and users can bring their concerns to the attention of Northern Regeneration either informally or formally.

### **INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

In the first instance complainants are strongly encouraged to resolve the matter informally with appropriate members of staff.

If a complaint is not resolved at this stage the complainant should be advised to progress their complaint through the formal complaints procedure.

### **FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Complainants can make a formal complaint either verbally or in writing. All formal complaints should be passed to the Managing Director.

All complaints will be formally acknowledged in writing upon receipt.

All formal complaints will be resolved within 10 working days of the receipt of the formal complaint or if this is not possible, the complainant will be advised on the progress made to address their concerns.

Upon completion of the investigation into the complaint the complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome.

If at this point the complainant feels their complaint has not been addressed to their satisfaction they can refer the complaint to the Board of Non-Executive Directors for further consideration.

If after due consideration by the Board of Non-Executive Directors the complainant feels their complaint has not been addressed to their satisfaction they can refer the complaint to the funding agency, or independent review body; details of which will be provided by Northern Regeneration.

## APPENDIX A

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### Stage 1 - Informal

Learners are encouraged to resolve issues informally before they become a complaint. Various avenues are open to learners to do this.

- Learners may raise their concerns directly with the person who, in their opinion, is responsible for the problem or with a lecturer/course/pathway leader for their course.
- Learners may raise issues with their course or programme representatives who may take those issues to staff meetings or to the learner forum/panel meetings.
- Directly with the Managing Director.

Employers, Parents and other members of the public or any incidental user of the services should, in the first instance, raise the issue directly with the person who, in their opinion, is responsible or with the supervisor or manager of the area concerned.

Former learners are expected to raise any concerns within three months of completing their programme of study.

#### STAGE 2 - FORMAL

If appropriate, and your complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1, you may choose to progress your complaint to Stage 2.

Complainants can make a formal complaint either verbally or in writing. All formal complaints should be passed to the Managing Director.

All complaints will be formally acknowledged in writing upon receipt.

All formal complaints will be resolved within 10 working days of the receipt of the formal complaint, or if this is not possible, the complainant will be advised on the progress made to address their concerns.

Upon completion of the investigation into the complaint the Managing Director will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome.

If at this point the complainant feels their complaint has not been addressed to their satisfaction they can refer to the complaint to the Board of Non-Executive Directors for further consideration (Final Stage).

We aim to provide you with a formal response within 10 working days. If we are unable to do this you will be kept informed of our progress.

#### STAGE 3 – FINAL STAGE

Where a complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily at Stage 2 you may choose to progress your complaint to Stage 3 which is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

This should be made to the Board of Non-Executive Directors in writing within 10 working days of when you received the Stage 2 response. Again you should explain why the outcome of the Stage 2 process is not satisfactory and what you would like us to do next.

If after due consideration by the Board of Non-Executive Directors the complainant feels their complaint has not been addressed to their satisfaction they can refer the complaint to the relevant Funding Agency or independent review body.

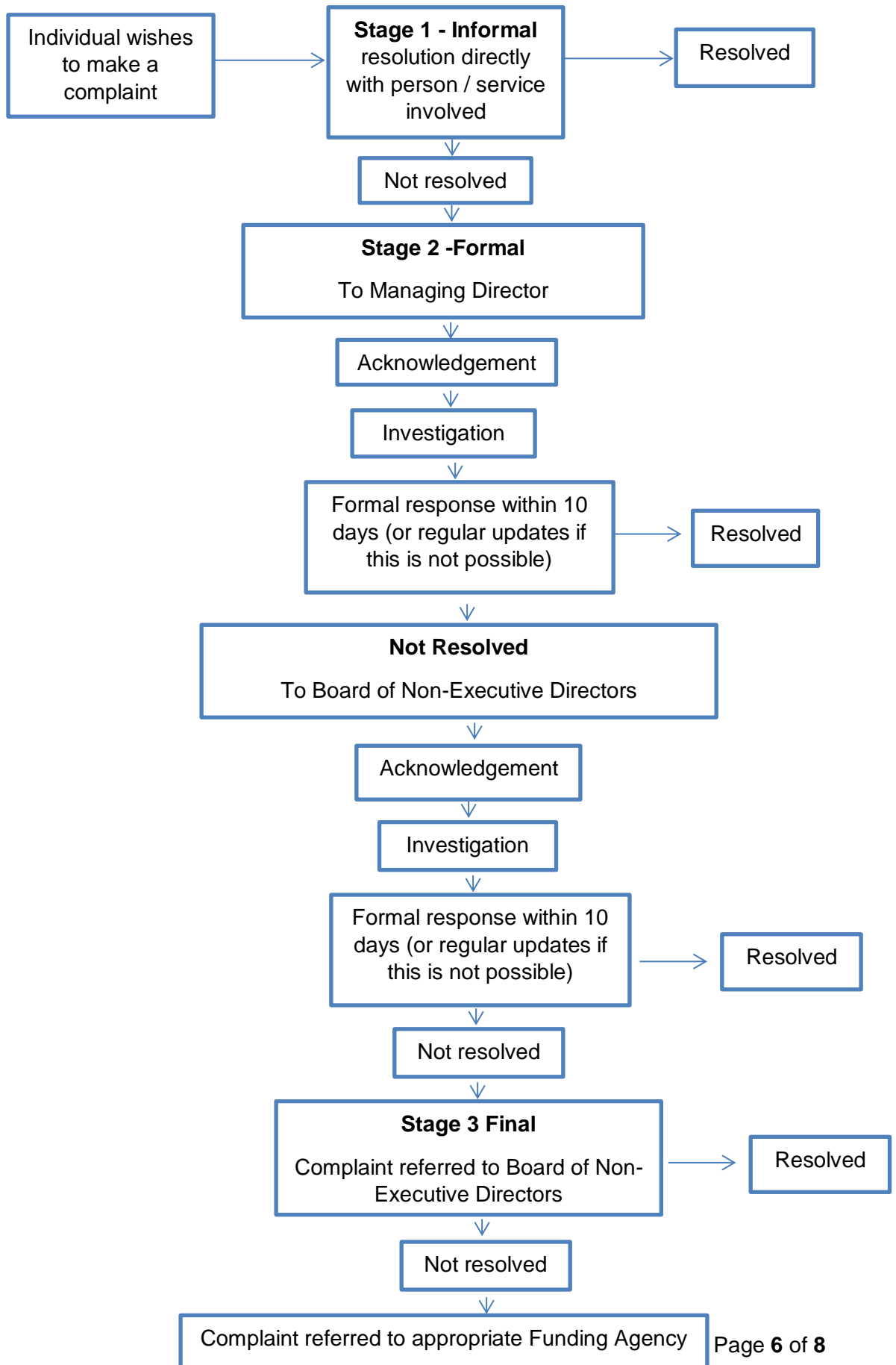
### **Independent Review of Learner complaints**

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of complaints from learners on course validated by a qualifying institution. For further information on the scheme see the OIA website: <http://oiahe.org.uk/>. Learners have 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter to bring a complaint to the OIA.

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

This policy and its supporting procedures apply equally to all learners of Northern Regeneration, employers or work-placement providers of learners and other users of services any of whom have the right to representation by parents, guardians, carers or other advocates on their behalf.

**APPENDIX A: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART**



**APPENDIX B: COMPLAINTS FORM**

**COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE**

**Personal Details**

Full Name: ..... Learner Number:.....

Course and Year:  
.....

Address for Correspondence:  
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Postcode: .....

Telephone / Mobile Number: .....

Email: .....

**Nature of Complaint**

Please include as much detail as possible (use additional sheets if necessary):

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Please detail what action you have taken to try and resolve the issue informally:

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What action or resolution are you seeking, if your complaint is found to be justified?

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**Supplementary Information**

Have you attached any supplementary information in support of your complaint?

Yes / No (*delete as appropriate*)

Please list attachments:

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.....  
.....

**Declaration**

I declare that the information given on this form is true, and that I am willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

I understand that appropriate members of staff, including any staff mentioned in the complaint, will have access to the information provided in support of this complaint.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

*Please note that complaints made by a third party (e.g. parent or guardian) on behalf of a learner will only be considered if a signed statement is received from the learner confirming their agreement.*