



ADULT EDUCATION WOLVERHAMPTON

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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2.2	16/02/2021	Added WMCA complaint contact details
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4.1	03/04/2024	Revision to Job Titles

COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

1. Purpose

Adult Education Wolverhampton are committed to providing a high standard of services for all of our users taking into consideration their views and using this information to improve and develop the quality of our service.

This document details how Adult Education Wolverhampton manages and responds to compliments, concerns and complaints.

A compliment, concern or complaint may be made by a student, prospective student, parent, employer or any interested party.

2. Responsibilities

- All staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and procedure.
- Overall responsibility for ensuring the procedure is followed lies with Student Voice and Support Officer and the Senior Manager for Business Operations and Student Services.

3. Compliments

We welcome compliments about what has worked well and when a good service has been received. Student Services will ensure that the person, department or service is made aware of your compliments.

Compliments may also be displayed on our Views, Comments and Suggestion Boards located onsite as well as on our website or social media platforms. Any displayed compliment will be anonymous unless the writer chooses to have their identity disclosed.

4. Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Adult Education Wolverhampton's action/lack of action or about the standard of service provided.

Raising concerns are helpful to solve problems quickly rather than investigating and substantiating claims. They seek agreement and shared understanding of how to avoid problems in the future.

A **concern** is an issue which is important or worrying to the individual and is usually made when:

- someone wants to raise something that is important or of interest to them about the service
- the issue may be less serious
- there is a chance of quickly preventing an issue from escalating
- there is a desire to find an informal solution

Formal complaints are for substantiating a complaint with evidence, or at least bringing the staff involved together to try to reach a satisfactory outcome for all. Formal complaints are usually appropriate when:

- the person complaining wants to do it formally
- informal attempts have failed
- the allegations are serious

5. How to raise a concern

If someone has a concern it should initially be raised with a member of staff. Staff must take every opportunity to resolve the concern informally and forward full details to Student Services at enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk or 01902 551658.

To raise a concern, they can contact Student Services to either request a Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Form or contact a member of staff from Student Services located in the Foyer Building (Wolverhampton, WV2 1AZ) in person or by telephone or email.

No one will be treated less favourably by raising a concern or making a complaint. In the event that anyone feels they have been treated unfairly, it will be taken seriously, and staff disciplinary procedures will be followed, if appropriate.

Any malicious complaints received in any form will be dealt with in line with behaviour management and disciplinary process through the Student Conduct Policy and procedure. Alternatively, if an informal resolution is not possible, a complaints form should be completed by the service user/student (with the assistance of a member of staff if required) and sent to Student Services. If the complaint is received by telephone or email, the member of staff can record the details on behalf of the complainant and send it to Student Services.

The outcome will be communicated by their preferred method of contact (where possible).

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Social Media Online Platforms

6. Purpose

Adult Education Wolverhampton's online brand has grown considerably over the last several years, which has led to an increase in visits to our social media accounts, website and search engine reviews. Due to this increased exposure online, we have seen a rise in compliments, complaints and concerns from the public on the following:

- Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - LinkedIn
 - YouTube
 - Google reviews
- **Standard Posts** (All social media platforms) - Comments which respond to any of our scheduled posts. These posts are permanently shown on our page.
 - **Paid promotions** (Currently only on Facebook) - These posts only appear for a certain period and disappear when the campaign is over. However, these posts reach a much wider audience, not including people who follow us; this can be well over 50,000 - 100,000+ people within the region.
 - **Private message** - all social media accounts enable the public to also private message us. Whilst not public to everyone else, messages need to receive a response.
 - **Facebook reviews** - every Facebook page has a reviews section, we should respond to every review, good or bad.
 - **Google reviews** - when searching 'Adult Education Wolverhampton' in Google, an area to the right appears with our business listing. As part of this listing, is a Google review area (which we do not have control over). This is monitored and responded to on a regular basis. The audience for these reviews may be much larger than the reviews via our social media accounts.

- **YouTube** - when we upload video content via YouTube, comments will appear underneath our videos, these comments are monitored and responded to. The option for comments can be turned off if this feature is not needed.

7. Responsibilities

All Social Media comments are responded to by the Digital Media Developer. In their absence this post will be covered by another member of staff to ensure a response is provided within the recommended 24 hours. The following list details cover for the post:

- First - Marketing Officer
- Second - Information and Learning Technologist
- Third - Student Services (Complaints)
- Fourth - Business Manager

All members of staff listed above have been provided access and log in details for all social media sites. All members of staff, if on duty, are to review the social media pages daily and respond within 24 hours of the enquiry/comment being made. There is an exception in the case of google reviews, where the response time is within a minimum of 48 hours during the normal working week.

All responses to comments posted on social media platforms is required within 24 hours (during the normal working week) of the initial contact made to AEW (with the exception of google reviews as stated above). Unlike emails, it is important to remember, everyone can see the complaint; this requires a quick response to demonstrate we actively check comments on a regular basis and welcome feedback to improve the service we deliver and strive to resolve concerns and complaints.

Compliments, concerns and complaints posted on all online platforms should be dealt with following the guidelines set out within this document and logged with Student Services in the first instance to ensure they are completed in a timely manner and resolve the issue to the service user's satisfaction.

8. How to make a formal complaint

If someone is not happy with their experience with us, we want to know. Speaking to staff informally in the first instance will often resolve any issue quickly. However, if this has been attempted and a service user wishes to proceed with a formal complaint, the following should be noted.

Any formal complaint needs to be raised within 1 month of the incident, but ideally as soon as possible. There are several ways to make a complaint to us:

- A complainant is invited to complete our Compliment, Complaint and Suggestions form and this is available upon request from enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk
- A PDF copy of this form can be downloaded and completed. Completed forms can be posted, emailed or brought into the Student Services office.
- A paper copy of the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Form is also available from reception or Student Services teams.
- A complainant could also email enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk or call 01902 551658

If a complaint is on behalf of another person, we will need their permission before we can disclose any information.

For parent(s)/guardian(s)/ward(s) acting on behalf of a dependant, permission will be obtained from the student as part of the process.

We will need as much information as possible, for example:

- Name (and the name of the person you are representing, if applicable)
- Date of birth
- Contact details
- Course (if applicable)
- Full details of complaint/compliment/suggestion (i.e. dates/names of people involved)
- Details of what has gone wrong and how we can correct it

AEW will ask for equality and diversity information, for example gender and ethnicity. Providing these details helps us make sure all people are treated fairly.

An investigation may not be possible or could be limited for anonymous complaints, depending on the amount of information provided.

Adult Education Wolverhampton staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and any violent or abusive behaviour towards them will not be tolerated.

9. Formal complaints process

There are two stages to Adult Education Wolverhampton's formal complaints process. We aim to resolve all complaints received at stage one. We investigate complaints thoroughly and objectively and all complaints are regularly monitored by the Student Voice and Support Officer.

10. What will happen with your complaint?

Stage 1

- Complaints are logged within two working days of receipt by Student Services.
- The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days.
- The complaint will be allocated by Student Services.
- An investigation will take place and we aim to resolve the complaint and communicate the outcome within fifteen (15) working days. However, some complaints may take longer. Where this is the case the approximate timescale for a resolution (dependant on the complexity of the issues raised) will be allocated to the case. The complainant will be made aware of the timescale amendment within the initial 15 working days.
- Once the appropriate area has drafted their response this will be forwarded to the Student Voice and Support Officer to ensure consistency and accuracy in our approach to complaints.
- At the end of the investigation (15 working days or otherwise), a resolution email will be sent to the complainant by the Student Voice and Support Officer or the manager of the department from where the complaint has come from. The complainant will be notified whether their complaint has been upheld and what changes will be made accordingly.

We will identify actions from complaints received to improve and develop our service.

11.Complaints appeal process

Stage 2

If the outcome does not meet expectations, an appeal can be made against the decision within twenty working days of our response. Stage 2 will consist of a review of the initial complaint and investigation.

- We will acknowledge the request for an appeal within five working days.
- The complaint will be investigated by a panel of three individuals appointed by the Student Voice and Support Officer and/or Senior Manager for Business Operations and Student Services who will review what has happened and hear details of the appeal.
- The panel members will be completely independent of the initial investigation. It is important to note that whilst panel members are independent of the initial investigation, they will be members of staff, and not outside sources.
- The panel meeting will take place within 30 (thirty) working days of the complainant's appeal. The panel meeting will involve an in-depth discussion on the initial and subsequent investigations and all its findings.
- A full report will be written by the panel, and this will be sent to the Student Voice and Support Officer and/or Senior Manager for Business Operations and Student Services for review.
- A subsequent response will be sent to the complainant within five working days of the panel meeting. This response will detail whether the appeal has been upheld or not upheld.

12.Still not satisfied?

Stage 2 is the final stage of Adult Education Wolverhampton's complaints procedure. If the outcome is still unsatisfactory, the complainant may contact our funders. The complainant should contact the Student Voice and Support Officer to determine what organisation they should contact (this is determined on where the complainant lives). Contact should be made within 1 month of the appeal decision. Follow up time will differ depending on each agency's standard response times.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
 Ministerial and Public Communications Division
 Department for Education
 Piccadilly Gate
 Store Street
 Manchester, M1 2WD
 Email: sde.servicedesk@education.gov.uk

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)
 Customer Relations
 16 Summer Lane
 Birmingham, B19 3SD
 Phone: 0345 3036760
 Email: customerservices@wmca.org.uk

Telephone lines are open from 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday (except Wednesday 1000 to 1800) and from 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays. We are closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Whistleblowing and Complaints Guidance

DfE's Whistleblowing and Complaints policies and processes for Skills Bootcamp and Multiply delivery
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure>

Whistleblowing for Skills Bootcamps and Multiply should be made through the 'whistleblowing' webform.
https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

Whistleblowing entries must be clearly marked as the programme type (e.g. Skills Bootcamp/Multiply) and will be escalated to the relevant policy team.

Provider should ensure this information is passed onto residents.

For all Skills programmes, providers should additionally submit a Whistleblowing complaint via WMCA portal.
<https://www.wmca.org.uk/policies/policies/policies/whistleblowing-and-fraud>

13. How to make a suggestion

Many of the best ideas for improving our service come from students. To make a comment or suggestion about Adult Education Wolverhampton or on how Adult Education Wolverhampton can improve, either speak to the Student Services team or complete a Views, Comments and Suggestions Form available from reception or online. Adult Education Wolverhampton welcome your thoughts and ideas. We will give updates about action we take. If we cannot take any action, we will let you know why.