

## Impact North West

### Complaints Procedures Policy

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<b>Approved by:</b>	Head of Centre
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## Statement of intent

At Impact North West, we pride ourselves on multi agency collaboration and effective inter agency working in order for our learners to benefit from our alternative education programme. It is vital that you refer to our other policies highlighted on our website which may also outline the relevant complaints process depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, there is a separate complaints policy relating to safeguarding concerns.

Impact aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage and is dedicated to ensuring all complaints are managed sympathetically and efficiently.

Any complaint or concern will be taken seriously, whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures will be implemented. This policy has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff, or the centres as a whole, relating to any aspects of the centre or the provision of facilities or services.

The centre will ensure the complaints procedure is:

- Easily accessible and publicised on the centre's website.
- Simple to understand and put into practice.
- Impartial and fair to all parties involved.
- Respectful of confidentiality duties.
- Continuously under improvement, using information gathered during the procedure.
- Fairly investigated, by an independent person when necessary.
- Used to address all issues to provide appropriate and effective responses where necessary.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following centre policies:

- Records Management Policy
- Grievance Policy

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## 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

- A **“complaint”** can be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction’ towards the actions taken or a perceived lack of action taken.
- A **“concern”** can be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt’ where reassurance is required; concerns will be classed and addressed as complaints.
- **“Complainants”** are those who have raised a concern or a complaint.
- A **“grievance”** is an issue raised by a member of staff where they feel the centre has not implemented a policy or process fairly or properly. Grievances will be dealt with in line with the centre's Grievance Policy.
- **“Days”** relate to school days.

## 3. Eligibility to make a complaint

Parents of learners currently being educated at Impact Northwest are able to make a complaint in line with this policy.

All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Parents will be assured that their children will not be penalised if they raise a complaint.

## 4. Timescales

Complaints are expected to be made as soon as possible after an issue arises to ensure the issue is addressed in an appropriate timescale.

The centre upholds a three-month time limit in which a complaint can be lodged following an incident. Complaints made outside this time limit will not be automatically refused and exceptions will be considered.

Timescales for managing complaints at specific stages are outlined in the relevant sections of this policy. In the case of any timescales changing, all parties involved will be informed of the changes in a timely manner.

## 5. Stages of Complaints

### Stage 1 - Informal raising of a concern

Impact North West will endeavour to resolve most concerns informally. Concerns will be raised initially as follows:

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Type of concern	Individual to whom a concern should be raised
Educational issues	The relevant tutor – the concern will be passed to a more senior member of staff if appropriate.
Pastoral care issues	Impact Lead/ Deputy Impact Lead
Behavioural issues	Centre Lead
Financial matters	Impact Lead
Other concerns	Centre Lead, Deputy Impact Lead, Impact Lead
Concerns regarding the Impact Lead	Head of Centre

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. A written record will be kept of all concerns and the date on which they were received. A concern provided in writing will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within two days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during school holidays.

If the concern is not resolved within five days or, in the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their concern, the complainant will be advised to proceed in accordance with the 'Formal complaint' stage of this procedure.

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## Stage 2 - Written complaint

If you are still unhappy with the response, outcome of the stage 1 complaint, the complainant should submit their complaint in writing to the Impact Lead. The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within two days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during school holidays, indicating that action is being taken and the likely timescales.

The Impact Lead is Morgan Alcock.  
Email address: [morgan@impactnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:morgan@impactnorthwest.org.uk)

The Impact Lead will meet with the complainant within five days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint to discuss the matter. If the complaint is about the Impact Lead, the discussion will take place with the Head of Centre.

During the meeting, the Impact Lead will attempt to reach a resolution; however, it may be necessary for further investigations to be carried out by the Impact Lead or another designated member of staff. If the complaint is about the Impact Lead, the head of centre will arrange any necessary investigations.

Written records will be kept of all meetings and other communications held in relation to the complaint.

Once all facts are established, the Impact Lead will inform the complainant of their decision and their reasoning in writing.

If the complaint is about the Impact Lead, the head of centre will inform the complainant of their decision and their reasoning in writing.

The complainant will be informed of the decision within 10 days from the receipt of the complaint. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay, the complainant will be notified of this and informed of the new timescales as soon as possible.

## Stage 3 - Formal Directors Complaint

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, then your complaint, to be sent to the Business Manager, will then be passed directly to the proprietary Body/Board of directors for review and they will deal with the complaint. They will aim to respond to you within a further 48 hours of notification of complaint at stage 3 and will respond in writing.

The Business Manager is Andrew Stewart

Address: Unit 1, Tower House, Tower Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1FF

Email address: [andrew@impactnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:andrew@impactnorthwest.org.uk)

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If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome suggested, they will be advised to proceed to the 'Panel hearing' stage of this procedure.

## Panel hearing

Where a complaint cannot be resolved, a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the centre's proprietor will be arranged.

The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the centre – this means they are not a member of the centres workforce or proprietor body and are not otherwise involved in the management of the centre, e.g. a solicitor who regularly acts for the centre.

The Complainant will be notified in writing at least ten days before the hearing of the time, venue, date and names and status of the panel members and be invited to attend.

A hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 days. Reasonable arrangements will be made to ensure the complainant can attend the panel hearing. If the complainant does not exercise the right to attend the panel hearing, the hearing will still be held.

The complainant will be informed that they are able to be accompanied at the hearing if they wish; however, legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

The right for a parent to be accompanied at a panel hearing does not confer a right on a parent to have a legal representative make representations on their behalf at a hearing, but the centre will decide whether to allow this on a case-by-case basis.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further details of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such information will be supplied to all parties no later than five days prior to the hearing.

After considering all of the relevant facts, the panel will make findings and recommendations. The decision, findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant in writing within five days of the hearing. A copy of the decision, findings and recommendations will be sent to, where relevant, the person complained about, the Impact Lead and the head of centre.

The decision of the panel will be final and represents the conclusion of the centre's complaints procedure.

If it is found that the centre has not met its requirements in relation to managing complaints because of the way a particular complaint has been handled, the Secretary of State has no power to compel the centre to alter its decision on that complaint, only to take regulatory action designed to address the failure to meet the complaints standard, so that future complaints are dealt with properly.

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## Recording complaints

A written record will be kept of any complaint made, detailing:

- Whether the complaint was resolved following an informal route, formal route or panel hearing.
- Actions taken by the centre as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Additional records may be kept containing the following information:

- The date the issue was raised
- The name of the complainant and, where relevant, their child
- A description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations
- Witness statements
- The name of the staff member responsible for handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of correspondence on the issue

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests to access them.

## Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

All changes made to this policy will be communicated with all relevant stakeholders.

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