

POL-QUA-0005

Complaints and Feedback Policy

Protected

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Distribution

All Futures Staff and Subcontractors

Related Policies	
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Version	Date	Author	Author's job Title	Changes
V2	Dec 2018	AT		Review of policy in terms of year date and other basic changes.
V1	Jan 2019	AT		Revised to V1 at start of 2019
V2	March 2019	BA		Policy updated in line with new policy design. Policy now includes information on customer feedback
V1	March 2021	BA		Checked over for accuracy, minor changes made
V2	July 2022	Loran Tapping	Governance Administrator	Transferred to new template. Interactive contents page added. Classification level added. Document Reference number added.
V2.1	Nov 2022	Tracey Finch	Quality Improvement Manager	Complaints process changed; policy updated to reflect changes

For Information: Where we refer to as 'Futures' in this policy – we are referencing a group of companies made up of Futures Advice, Skills & employment Ltd and Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Youth Support Ltd

To keep things simple throughout this document, 'we' and 'us' means the Group Companies and its associated brands. This policy applies across all companies within the Group.

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1. Policy Context/Statement

1.1 For information:

The Futures Group – which we will refer to as ‘Futures’ in this policy – is made up of a number of related brands and businesses: Futures for You, Futures for Business and Futures Employment Solutions.

To keep things simple throughout this document, ‘we’ and ‘us’ means the Group and its brands.

1.2 Futures is committed to providing a high-quality service for all our customers including young people, adults, employers, apprentices, schools, colleges, funders, and partner agencies. These standards are set out in our Customer Commitment which were developed in consultation with staff and customers. Enabling all our customers to feedback on the service they have received and listening and responding to this feedback is a crucial part of our Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy.

1.3. As part of our Equality and Diversity Plan, we:

- a) Analyse survey data to ensure we are obtaining feedback from diverse groups in terms of their awareness of the service, access to the service, usage of the service and their satisfaction of the service
- b) Ensure views of protected groups are sought and reflected in the analysis of any customer feedback activity (for all contracts).
- c) Use findings to adjust the services for these groups where appropriate.

2. Overall Aim and Objectives

2.1 Overall aim: We aim to ensure that all:

- a) Customers are aware of how they can make a complaint, and that the process is clear and transparent.
- b) Complaints are dealt with promptly, politely, fairly, and consistently, appropriately, and confidentially.
- c) Feedback is an opportunity to gain experience, and a basis from which we can inform the continuous improvement of services, ensuring effective partnership working, value for money and efficiencies.
- d) Staff take account of our duty to promote equality and diversity.

2.2 Objectives:

- a) The 'Have Your Say' poster will be clearly displayed in all delivery locations.
- b) All staff and subcontractors will understand their role and responsibilities with regards to customer feedback and complaints and act accordingly.
- c) All staff and subcontractors will seek and drive forward improvements to our service, using customer feedback as a starting point.
- d) Staff will embody and promote Futures' core values.

3. Definitions

3.1 Customer

A customer can be described as any person or organisation that receives a service from Futures. This includes:

- a) The public – both adults and children, those in work or training or who are unemployed (including apprentices)
- b) Partner agencies that we link with or make referrals to such as training providers, Job Centres, and community centres
- c) Businesses wanting to find staff or upskill their existing workforce
- d) Funders such as the City and County Councils

3.2 Effective Customer Feedback

Effective customer feedback is information that comes directly from customers about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a Futures service. This information tells us whether we are meeting our customers' needs and acts as a catalyst for change to improve services.

Feedback can be both formal and informal – surveys, emails, and focus groups as well as offhand comments. In order for feedback to be effective, it must be collected, analysed, and utilised to drive change so that in effect, the customer is influencing their own service.

3.3 Complaint

A complaint occurs when a customer, funder, or partner agency's experience of a Futures service falls below their expectations. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by a Futures service or its staff affecting a customer, funder, or partner. It should be noted that expectations are very subjective and depend upon many factors.

Some examples of complaints would be where a customer, funder or partner considers that there has been:

- a) Failure to provide a service at the right time or to the standard expected of a Futures service.
- b) Dissatisfaction due to the customer being refused a service by Futures for several reasons under the National Careers Service contract. This could occur whether or not the customer is resident in the geographical area of delivery.
- c) Dissatisfaction due to a customer, learner or employer being refused a service by Futures Training.
- d) Dissatisfaction in answering a query or responding to a request for a service (with the exception of assessment appeals which would be covered under the Futures Training 'Appeals and Malpractice Procedure')
- e) Dissatisfaction with the service provided by a particular member of staff e.g., discourteous, or dishonest behaviour.
- f) Failure to follow the agreed policy, procedures, and processes of a Futures service.
- g) Harassment, bias, or any form of unfair discrimination, whether racial, gender, religious or sexual orientation.

- h) A perceived breach of data sharing or confidentiality.

3.4 Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

The vast majority of customers who complain have a genuine complaint, and act entirely reasonably throughout the complaints process. A small minority of customers may act inappropriately or unacceptably causing undue stress on staff and using up valuable time and resources. In these exceptional circumstances, customers may be deemed vexatious or persistent complainant.

4 Roles, Responsibilities and Structure

4.1 All Staff, Volunteers and Apprentices:

- a) Deliver a service in line with the Customer Commitment.
- b) Understand the Complaints Process and be able to explain it to customers.
- c) Take down accurate details of any complaint and pass on to the appropriate Team Manager promptly.
- d) Investigate complaints if requested by a manager.
- e) Follow the Customer Feedback Process and be able to explain to customers why we are requesting feedback and how it is used.
- f) Use the learning from the outcome of feedback and complaints to make improvements to their service.

4.2 Futures and Subcontractor Managers

- a) Display the 'Have Your Say' poster which publicises to customers how they can give feedback or make a complaint.
- b) Ensure that staff deliver the service in line with the Customer Commitment.
- c) Ensure that the Customer Feedback Process is followed when feedback is received.
- d) Ensure that the Complaints Process is followed in the event of a complaint being received.
- e) Investigate complaints against members of staff.
- f) Escalate possible vexatious or persistent complaints to the relevant Senior Manager or Director.
- g) Complete the complaints spreadsheet when a complaint is received and update it when it has been resolved. The spreadsheet can be found in the Company Managers sharepoint channel - [Complaints](#)
- h) NCS Futures and Subcontractor Managers must also complete DFE complaints log when they receive and resolve a complaint - [DFE complaints log](#)
- i) On a monthly basis, discuss and review the feedback and complaints data from Quality Performance Clinics with team members. Use the learning from the outcome of feedback and complaints to make improvements to the service.
- j) Share and publicise customer feedback –include the action we plan to take or have taken.

4.3 Marketing and Communications Team:

- a) Will forward details of any feedback or complaints that come in from Futures social media pages to the relevant Manager for action.
- b) Use feedback information for promotional purposes on social media, newsletters and with key stakeholders.

4.4 Quality Team:

- a) Monitor complaints received via Futures website and forward these to the relevant Manager for action.
- b) Oversees feedback and complaints received by the divisions/teams within the Company in order to identify cross company themes for improvement. Information is added to the quality dashboard which is discussed with ELT and SLT.

4.5 Senior Managers and Directors:

- a) Deal with escalated complaints from Managers.
- b) Investigate complaints against Managers.
- c) Deal with vexatious or persistent complainants: each case will have to be considered on its merits, and professional judgement to be used on what actions may be necessary.
- d) Review and discuss feedback and complaints data at ELT/SLT meetings to agree where action needs to be taken to improve services.

4.6 The Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency:

These departments will investigate any unresolved complaints relating to the National Careers Service Contract (Dfe), Apprenticeships and AEB (ESFA) as an external body.

5. Procedures

5.1 Complaints Process

- a) For complaints about members of staff, depending on the nature of the complaint, Managers may need to follow the procedures in the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy and Malpractice and Maladministration Policy for Futures for Business. Depending upon the nature of the complaint advice should be sought from the People and Culture team.
- b) If the complaint is relating to a safeguarding issue, then this needs to be referred to Karenza Morgan (Safeguarding Lead).
- c) For all complaints all staff must use the Complaints Process flow chart and supporting documents on the intranet - [complaints process](#) or the quality section of the Knowledge store for National Careers Service customers for guidance on what action needs to be taken when a complaint is received e.g. all complaints must be referred to your line manager.
- d) If the manager feels that a complainant may be vexatious then this needs to be escalated to the relevant senior manager or director, who will review the case and decide how to proceed.

5.2 Customer Feedback Process

- a) We consult with customers and obtain their feedback through a variety of methods, whichever is most appropriate to each situation. These currently include telephone interviews, questionnaires/surveys, face-to-face interviews, case studies, emails/verbal comments from customers and direct endorsements by customers on Google, Facebook, and Twitter. We regularly review how feedback is collected and if opportunities arise, we will carry out focus groups.
- b) Information on how and when we collect customer feedback can be found in the [customer feedback](#) section of the intranet or the quality section of the Knowledge store for National Careers Service customers.

5.3 GDPR

- a) We will not use customer quotes or comments without the express permission of the customer, if that quote can be personally attributable in any way.
- b) When consulting with customers, we will provide full and clear information as to the purpose of the research and what will happen with the information.

6. Related training and continuous professional development

Any relevant learning obtained from feedback and complaints will be passed on to employees, volunteers, and sub-contractors in order to improve the Futures service. This may involve changes to procedures or completing CPD.

7. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Policy will review the policy and procedures lead every two years to ensure they remain in line with contract requirements and GDPR legislation.

8. List of related strategies, policies, and procedures

8.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents.

- 8.2. List of related strategies, policies, and procedures (all located in the [Policy Zone](#))
- a) Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy
 - b) Data Protection Policy
 - c) Equality and Diversity Policy and Plan
 - d) Safeguarding Policy
 - e) People and Culture Zone – Code of Conduct and Professional Standards Policy
 - f) Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy
 - g) Malpractice and Maladministration Policy