

Westminster Adult Education Service

Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

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Version: 6

Owner:	Head of Learner Development	Approved by:	Executive Board	Date of approval:	Sept 2025
Effective From Date:	Sept 2025	Effective To Date:	Sept 2026	Next Review Date:	July 2026



WAES VALUES – Indicate & comment on which values are attributed to this policy procedure

Value	✓	Comment
R espect – We are inclusive and fair and strive for equality in everything we can do.	/	All learners are provided the opportunity to make informal/formal complaints
A spiration – We aim high for our learners and do not accept mediocrity.	/	WAES operates ‘you said we did’ approach to learner feedback and complaints
I nnovation – We strive for continuous improvement, embrace change and take risks, across all parts of the service.	/	WAES has an online LIVE Feedback form where learners can post positive feedback and concerns (not official complaints) in order that WAES can share compliments or respond to issues early
S ustainability – We always assess our impact on the environment, whether that be physical, social or economic.	/	Electronic records will be kept where possible
E xcellence – In all that our staff do, they strive to be the best they can be.	/	Complaints provide valuable feedback and where appropriate will be acted on to improve the service WAES offers

1. Purpose and Scope

Introduction

- 1.1 The Compliments and Complaints Policy is to encourage an open and transparent approach to the management of both complimentary and critical feedback. This is applied to the full range of services provided by Westminster Adult Education Services.
- 1.2 WAES strives to provide the best quality of learning and services that meet or exceed expectations of learners and users.
- 1.3 WAES 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 our provision to learners and other users.
- 1.4 Occasionally services fail, and this can lead to customer dissatisfaction, we seek to address and resolve all complaints within a specified period, in a manner that is supported by clear and accessible procedures that ensure thorough investigation and fairness.
- 1.5 Likewise, we seek to identify what has worked well, to enable spreading of good practice and reward staff. This is recorded within this policy as a compliment.
- 1.6 In addressing issues that may give rise to complaints, complainants are strongly encouraged to resolve the matter informally with appropriate members of staff. It is the WAES experience that good communication between concerned members of staff can frequently stop minor issues from developing into major ones and can avoid the need for the time and difficulties associated with formal investigations.
- 1.7 It is the responsibility of all staff to take action to deal quickly with issues or concerns as they arise, to communicate with others as needed, and discuss matters with their line managers before recommending that individuals follow the formal compliments and complaints procedure.

2 Scope

- Compliments, written comments and complaints by any person who accesses our services including learners, visitors and nursery users.
- Learner Voice activities including surveys, focus groups, and student representation.

- 2.1 The Policy should not be used where a complaint/ issue is best addressed by another WAES policy. In such cases the person will be advised of the procedure they need to follow.
- 2.2 If the complaint relates to assessment and/or examination procedures, this will be dealt with under the relevant exams policy. If the complaint is about an awarding body, the complaint will be directed to the relevant organisation.

- 2.3 If the complaint is about staff conduct, it will be passed to our Human Resources department. In this case, the person raising the complaint will be advised and reassured that the issue will be investigated to decide the best course of action in line with our internal management procedures. HR may make contact to obtain further information and to provide an update on the complaint.
- 2.4 Complaints must be made directly by the learner/s concerned unless they have a learning disability and or difficulty that prevents them doing so, in which case the parent/carer/guardian or next of kin can do so on the learner's behalf.
- 2.5 WAES recognises that, on occasion, a group of learners may wish to raise a collective complaint. Each party should explain how they have individually been affected by the situation and the group should nominate one of its number to act as its representative.
- 2.6 WAES has a duty of care for its employees, when dealing with a serial and/or vexatious complainant we reserve the right to refuse to investigate a complaint

2.Objectives

The objectives underpinning this policy are:

- To provide a clear and consistent framework for dealing with feedback, whether a compliment, comment or complaint.
- Encourage complainants to resolve their dissatisfaction through open and informal procedures in the first instance.
- Ensure that privacy and confidentiality is respected when dealing with a complaint
- Celebrate good practice
- Rectify poor experiences
- Monitor, share and feed into actions to ensure continuous improvement.

3. Responsibilities

3. 1 All Staff:

- Treat all complaints seriously, dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the policy.
- Provide support and guidance to anyone who requests assistance to access the process.
- Respond promptly to any requests for information.
- Investigate impartially and deal with all information factually to conclude the complaint.

3.2 Managers/Heads of Department

- Oversight of the compliments, comments and complaints for their area, ensuring that compliments are shared, issues are dealt with satisfactorily and improvement points are discussed in the appropriate forum and translate into trackable actions.
- Ensuring that all staff involved in the handling of complaints are appropriately trained and made aware of their individual roles and responsibilities in following the policy and related procedures.
- Investigating and resolving complaints according to the timescales set out the complaint procedure.
- Ensuring that improvement points are addressed in quality improvement measures, identifying actions to provide sustainable positive change.
- Ensure outcome and any preventative action is recorded on the central log in a timely manner and those complaints are closed immediately following resolution of a complaint in line with the policy.

3.3 Head of Learner Development

- Designing and delivering a range of Learner Voice activities to gather feedback from learners.
- Monitor the central feedback log for accuracy and consistency of the outcomes.
- Provide training to new Managers on investigating complaints.
- Provide support and guidance on all matters relating to the Compliments and Complaints Policy.
- Escalate to the Executive Board when complaints are not actioned correctly.
- Provide Termly RAG rated reports to the Executive Board.
- Reports to Governors Board as required within the cycle.

3.4 Central Administration Teams

- Logging compliments, comments and complaints centrally, including appeals and outcomes in a timely manner.
- Administration of the complaint procedure and monitoring compliance with the procedures.

3.5 Assistant Principal Business Support Services

- Closely monitor complaints to ensure appropriate, timely action is taken in line with Compliments and Complaints policy.

- Investigate appeals and ensure all information relating to each appeal, the outcome and any preventative action is recorded on the central feedback and that appeals are closed immediately following resolution of a complaint.
- Take appropriate action where Service Management Teams are not responding to complaints in line with the policy.

4. Associated Documentation/Linked Policies/Procedures

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Learner Behaviour & Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding and Radicalisation Policy
- Compliments, Comments, Complaints Procedure (including 1 page summary and form questions)

5. Access to the Policy

The policy will be published on the WAES SharePoint Home Site under “Documents...WAES Policies” and the WAES website. [Policies and Procedures - Westminster Adult Education Service](#)

6. Document Retention & Monitoring and Review

6.1 Records of complaints MUST be retained for 3 academic years and stored electronically where possible.

6.2 The **Head of Learner Development** will review this policy annually. The operation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated through regular reviews of the record of complaints and outcomes so that any patterns can be identified, and appropriate interventions made. WAES Governing body reviews an annual anonymised report.

7. RAG rating of complaints for reporting purposes

Green	Complaints dealt with informally
Amber	Complaints that have been investigated by the Area Head or manager
Red	Complaints that have been appealed and or complaints sent to HR

Equality Impact Assessment / Safeguarding & Sustainability Considerations

Westminster Adult Education Service is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Name of Policy/Procedure	Compliments and Complaints
<p>1 If Equality Impact Analysis is not relevant to this function, give reasons and proceed to section 5.</p>	
<p>2 In what ways could this function have a negative impact on any of the groups above? What actions have been taken to eliminate these?</p>	<p>There could be resource limitations in helping learners to follow all the requirements of this procedure. We would explore all the options available to us in order to support all users in their understanding and application of the procedure and make reasonable adjustments to the procedure if required, for instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations</p>
<p>3 In what ways could this function have a positive impact on any of the groups above? How will this function be used to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups? Are there plans for the future that will further advance equality?</p>	<p>This policy aims to be an open access and all-inclusive process. The annual review of complaints will look to identify any patterns and trends and actions to address these.</p>
<p>4 What evidence supports your judgement eg. Observations, Consultations, expert opinions, quantitative or qualitative surveys. If the evidence is in the form of additional documentation where is this stored?</p>	<p>Comprehensive and up to date Complaints Records</p>

<p>5 Has this function taken into account and cross-referenced where appropriate to Safeguarding policy and procedures? Give Details.</p>	Records of training
<p>POLICY OWNER: Annette Elizabeth Robson Head of Learner Development Date: 16/07/25</p>	GDPR regulations have been considered, and actions comply with data protection requirements.

Version Control Information

Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes
1	16 Nov 2021	A Robson S Whitehouse	Added clarity around scope and learner responsibility. Included the different possible outcomes following complaint investigation. Made clear the 2 grounds for appeals to be considered. Added statement on serial and vexatious complaints
2	20 Sept 2022	A Robson S Whitehouse	No Change to Policy. Extended Review Date from Oct 22 to May 2023.
3	Sept 2023	A Robson S Whitehouse	No Change. Extended Dates
4	31 July 2024	S Whitehouse	Added document retention to section 11 as records of complaints to be kept for 3 academic years.
5	08 Jan 2025	A Giles	Policy and procedure streamlined and split. Added a 1page summary and screen shots of MS form as appendix to procedure Managers/Heads of Dept



			to take lead on complaints for their areas.
6	16.7.2025	Annette Elizabeth Robson Head of Learner Development	Update on section 3.3 Additional information covering WCC and timeframe added to the Procedure document.