

Approved by:	The Board	Date: 18/09/2023
Frequency:	19/09/2022	
Next review due by:	September 2025	

1. Introduction

Youth Works make every effort to ensure that all learners, service users, parents and visitors are satisfied with the service they have received from the organisation. Occasionally, a complaint may be made against some aspect of the service received, whether justified or not, which requires a response and in some cases, needs to be redressed.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process

2. Procedure

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

Therefore there are three stages in our complaints procedure:

Stage One - Informal

Youth Works takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter quickly.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Chief Executive Officer* as appropriate

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint

Stage 2 - Formal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, your concerns should be put in writing and sent to the Cindy Wrighting, Chief Executive Officer at the Keystone Centre, 97 Rockingham Road, Kettering, NN16 9HX or emailed to cwrighting@youthworksnorthamptonshire.org.uk

When Youth Works receive a written complaint, the following action will be taken:

1. The complaint will be recorded and filed in Youth Works' Compliments and Complaints file.
2. You will receive an acknowledgement either by email or letter within 5 working days of receipt of your complaint.
3. Once your complaint has been fully investigated, a decision will be made whether to uphold the complaint fully, uphold the complaint partially or not to uphold the complaint.
4. You will receive written notification of the findings and recommendation, either by email or letter, within 5 working days of the decision being made.
5. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection on the Organisation's premises by the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer.

If the complaint is upheld, either in full or partially, the following action will be taken:

- We will offer an explanation and issue a formal apology.
- We will confirm any remedial action taken to ensure that the problem does not happen again.

If you remain unsatisfied with the response you receive, you should make a formal complaint to the Chair of Trustees.

Stage Three - Appeal

If you are still not happy with the outcome, an appeal should be made to the Chair of Trustees, within 10 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the investigation.

The appeal will be dealt with as follows:

1. The appeal will be heard by a committee of 3 individuals, not directly involved in the matters of the complaint, appointed by the Chair of Trustees. At least one member of the committee will be independent of the management and running of the Organisation. The appeal will be heard within 20 days of the appeal being received. In circumstances whereby twenty working days is impractical, this period may be extended with the agreement of Youth Works and yourself.
2. The meeting will be arranged at a time which is convenient for yourself and the committee members and all relevant documentation will be submitted to all parties at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.
3. You may choose to be accompanied by a representative or friend at the appeal hearing. The Chief Executive Officer should be notified, in writing prior to the meeting, of any person who will be accompanying you.
4. At the end of the appeal hearing, the panel will consider the issues and write to yourself, the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about, with their decision within 5 working days.

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). The record will also include details of how the complaint was resolved, whether it went to an appeal panel and the action taken by Youth Works as a result of the complaint. Details of the number of complaints relating to Youth Works Community College, registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, will be made available on the college section of the organisation's website.

All 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 2008 Act requests access to them.

3. Complaints against the headteacher, a governor or the governing board

Stage One - Informal

Complaints made against the headteacher or any member of the board should be directed to the clerk to the board (Business Manager) in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the headteacher or one member of the board (including the chair), a suitably-skilled and impartial trustee will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out in section 6 above).

Stage Two - Formal

If the complaint is about the chair, the entire board or the majority of the board, an independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2 (set out in above). They will be appointed by the board, and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

Stage Three - Appeal

If the complaint is about the chair, the entire board or the majority of the board, a committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, and will carry out the steps at stage 3 (set out above).

4. Referring complaints on completion of the college's procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure and the complaint is regarding the school not meeting standards set by the DfE in any of the following areas, the complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE:

- Education
- Pupil welfare and health and safety
- School premises
- Staff suitability
- Making information available to parents
- The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils

The DfE will consider reports of a major failure to meet the standards. Where appropriate, it can arrange an emergency inspection to look at pupil welfare and health and safety, and make sure that the school deals with serious failings.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

5. Serial or Persistent Complainants to Youth Works Community College

The decision to stop responding should never be taken lightly. College needs to be able to say yes to all of the following:

- College has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any); and
- They are contacting the college repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

The case is stronger if College agrees with one or more of these statements:

- The college has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience - have they actually said as much in a letter, email or telephone call?
- Their letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- They make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

Once College has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, they will let the complainant know.

**The Chief Executive Officer is also the Head Teacher for Youth Works Community College.*