



Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1. Scope

- 1.01 This policy and procedure details how a purchaser of NOCN services, including centres, training providers and users of NOCN Job Cards, can provide feedback or make a complaint to NOCN Group regarding the level of service they have received.
- 1.02 This policy and procedure is **not applicable** if an individual wishes to report a case of suspected malpractice or maladministration. If an individual wishes to raise a concern regarding malpractice or maladministration regarding the delivery of qualifications or completion of End Point Assessments, they should refer to the NOCN Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.
- 1.03 This policy and procedure is **not applicable** if an individual wishes to appeal against a decision made by NOCN or an NOCN representative (aside from decisions regarding Centre, staff or qualification approval, where this policy does apply as these decisions cannot be appealed). If an individual wishes to enquire or appeal against a decision made by NOCN, they should refer to the NOCN Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 1.04 The intended audience for this document is:
- NOCN Group Directors and Board of Trustees.
 - NOCN Group core, sub-contracted and associate staff, including External Quality Assurers (EQAs).
 - All staff of NOCN Delivery Partners associated with NOCN provision.
 - All individuals involved in the delivery of NOCN Group's products or services.
 - All users of NOCN Group's products and services, including learners and apprentices.
 - Qualification Regulators¹.
 - Industry Regulators.

2. Purpose

- 2.01 The purpose of this document is to:
- Provide examples of where an individual may wish to provide feedback or make a complaint to NOCN Group.
 - Outline the procedure of how an individual can provide feedback or make a complaint to NOCN Group.
 - Inform individuals of how NOCN Group will respond upon receipt of their feedback or their complaint.
 - Support NOCN Group's commitment to delivering a high standard to all users of its services.

3. Policy

- 3.01 As a values-driven charitable organisation, NOCN Group places importance on ensuring that each one of its customers receives a friendly, flexible and responsive service from our staff members and our representatives. However, at times, there may be circumstances where an individual feels dissatisfied with the service that they have received. This policy and procedure details how an individual can share details of their experience with NOCN Group, whether this is positive or negative.

¹ Ofqual in England; Qualification Wales; CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland or successor bodies.

3.02 NOCN Group is committed to providing a service to all our customers that is:

- a) High quality.
- b) Consultative and responsive.
- c) Open and helpful.
- d) Timely and efficient.
- e) Straightforward and manageable.
- f) Cost effective.

I. Feedback

3.03 NOCN Group welcomes feedback and suggestions from all users of its services and aims to be proactive in identifying concerns or issues and in taking appropriate action to address and prevent issues. Where received, NOCN Group will aim to utilise feedback to continuously shape, inform and improve its future service.

3.04 Individuals are able to provide NOCN Group with feedback at any time via both email and telephone. Where an issue or concern is raised to NOCN Group, its experienced staff members will strive to respond to and resolve the issue or concern efficiently and effectively.

3.05 While NOCN Group hopes that most issues or concerns can be resolved informally, if an individual is not satisfied with our response to their feedback or comments, they may wish to raise a subsequent complaint.

II. Complaints

3.06 Individuals may wish to raise a complaint where they are dissatisfied with a service they have received and wish for the matter to be investigated. Examples of where an individual may wish to make a complaint include, but are not limited to, instances where:

- a) Enquiries sent are not responded to in a timely or appropriate manner.
- b) There is a delay in the issuing of invoices, or where invoices are issued incorrectly.
- c) There is a delay in the issuing of certificates upon learner achievement.
- d) NOCN Group's policies or procedures are not complied with by our staff or representatives.
- e) A learner, apprentice or individual registered or completing a NOCN product has exhausted a Centre/Training Provider's own complaints procedure and is not satisfied with the outcome.

3.07 NOCN Group will investigate all complaints in a serious manner and will provide complainants with a clear and appropriate response. In line with this policy and procedure, we will:

- a) Provide clear, accessible information on its complaints procedure for all users of its services.
- b) Operate this complaints policy and procedure in an open, transparent and accountable way.
- c) Aim to resolve any raised complaints effectively and efficiently, ensuring that individuals are fully informed of progress and timescales throughout.
- d) Monitor the frequency and subject content of both feedback and complaints to ensure lessons are learned, as well as to implement any appropriate improvements.

3.08 NOCN Group will aim to respond to complaints within the timescales detailed within Section 4 of this policy and procedure. However, there may be instances where timescales may need to

be extended in order for the concerns to be fully addressed. If this is the case, the individual who raised the complaint will be informed of any new required timescales.

III. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 3.09 NOCN Group will aim to keep an individual's complaint confidential, but in some cases the circumstances around the complaint may mean that this is not possible, and therefore confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- 3.10 If a complainant wishes to raise a complaint on behalf of another individual, they must provide NOCN Group with written confirmation from that individual confirming the agreement and that the nominated complainant can act on the individual's behalf.

IV. Unacceptable or Unreasonable Complaints and Behaviour

- 3.11 NOCN Group expects all of its staff and representatives to communicate and behave in a supportive, respectful and professional manner and therefore we also expect this behaviour from the users of our services.
- 3.12 Where it is deemed that a complaint or communication received from a user of its services has been made on unacceptable and/or unreasonable grounds, this will be communicated to the individual concerned, with reference made to this policy and procedure.
- 3.13 Examples of unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:
- a) The use of abusive and threatening language in a telephone conversation, a face-to-face meeting or in written correspondence.
 - b) Making derogatory or accusatory remarks about NOCN Group, NOCN or its subsidiaries, an NOCN Group employee or associate.
 - c) Making complaints that are designed to cause unnecessary disruption.
 - d) Making unreasonable demands from NOCN Group.
 - e) Repeatedly contacting NOCN Group by telephone, email, digitally or other written form without offering new evidence or information.
- 3.14 Where NOCN Group deems that an individual communicates or behaves in a manner deemed unacceptable, including where communication is aggressive, vexatious, malicious, frivolous or persistent, NOCN Group reserves the right to disregard that individual's communication and may instruct its staff and representatives to cease any further communication with the individual(s) concerned. Where this applies to a purchaser of NOCN Group services, a review of the relationship and agreement with that purchaser may be completed and may be terminated.

4. Complaints Procedure

- 4.01 If a learner, or an individual acting on behalf of a learner such as an employer, wishes to complain about a service that they have received by a NOCN Approved Centre, the individual must first follow and exhaust the Centre's own internal complaints procedure before raising their complaint to NOCN Group. If the individual is not satisfied with the response provided by the Centre, the individual may wish to raise their complaint to NOCN Group. The individual should aim to do this within **10 working days** of receipt of the response from the Centre.

- 4.02 NOCN Group is not able to acknowledge or respond to a complaint regarding a Delivery Partner unless the individual has followed the Delivery Partner's own complaints procedure first. If the individual is not satisfied with the response provided by the Delivery Partner, the individual may wish to raise their complaint to NOCN Group. The individual should aim to do this within **10 working days** of receipt of the Delivery Partner's response.
- 4.03 To raise a complaint, an individual should submit the details of their complaint, alongside any supporting evidence via email at nocn@nocn.org.uk or via telephone at 0300 999 1177.
- 4.04 When submitting a complaint, an individual should provide the following details in order for the matter to be thoroughly investigated and to enable NOCN Group to provide a response:
- The individual's full name and contact details, including a daytime telephone number and email address.
 - A full description of the complaint, including as much detail as possible such as dates, times and individuals involved.
 - Details of any responses already received from NOCN, or one of its Approved Centres/Training Providers, regarding the complaint (if applicable).
 - Full details of the product is in relation to, such as learner/apprentice name and the name of the qualification/apprenticeship standard, employer and Centre/Training Provider name (where applicable).
 - Copies of any supporting documentation or evidence related to the complaint.
- 4.05 NOCN Group will acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the individual within **2 working days**.
- 4.06 In order for the complaint to be fully investigated, NOCN Group will liaise with the appropriate department for investigation, review and comment. If further information is required from the complainant, this will be requested as part of this investigation.

V. Outcome and Response

- 4.07 NOCN Group will complete an investigation into the complaint and provide a response to the complainant in writing within **10 working days** of receipt. During its investigation into a complaint, NOCN Group will aim to ensure that the complainant is kept informed of progress and will inform them of any subsequent timescales, as outlined in 3.08. NOCN Group will aim to provide a detailed response to each complaint, this may include providing the reasons why an event occurred, what actions will be taken resolve the event, as well as providing an apology, where each of these are appropriate.
- 4.08 Upon closure of each investigation into a complaint, NOCN Group will give due consideration of how it can improve its services and arrangements to prevent a similar reoccurrence in the future if a failure has been identified. This may include reviewing procedures or providing further training to its staff members or representatives.

5. Escalation of a Complaint

- 5.01 Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may wish to escalate their complaint to a member of the NOCN Group Senior Leadership Team. Details of the appropriate escalation contact will be provided within NOCN Group's response to the original complaint.

- 5.02 To support their escalation, the individual must provide full details of their complaint, as well as outlining why they are dissatisfied with the response that they have received from representatives from NOCN Group.
- 5.03 A member of the Senior Leadership Team will review the complaint to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed in responding to the original complaint and will provide a response within **10 working days** of receipt.
- 5.04 If the complainant is not satisfied with how their complaint has been escalated, they are able to express their dissatisfaction to the NOCN Group Chief Executive Officer. Details of how a complaint can be escalated will be provided by NOCN upon request, however the CEO may not respond to a complaint if it has not already been reviewed and a response provided by a NOCN representative. Any outcome provided by the CEO will be NOCN Group's final response to the complaint. Any further correspondence will not be accepted and/or acknowledged by the Group.

6. Document Control

- 6.01 This policy is maintained by the NOCN Quality Assurance Team and will be reviewed and updated where necessary to reflect updated legislation, customer feedback, improvements of operation and changes to the regulatory environment. If you have any queries regarding the contents or the use of this policy, please contact the NOCN Quality Assurance Team directly on assurance@nocn.org.uk.
- 6.02 All NOCN policies and procedures are signed off by the NOCN Responsible Officer. The latest versions of which can be found on our website here: <https://www.nocn.org.uk/support/nocn-group-policies/>.