



Complaints and Policy Procedure

Link to policy on website: [Our Policies - PFP Thrive](#)

Document History: to be reviewed on at least an **annual basis** or sooner if there are significant changes required.

Approval should be the Academy Director or a relevant member of the Academy Governing Board.

Approved by | Tom Arey

Position | PFP Thrive Academy Director

Date | October 2024

Next Review Date | October 2025

Signed

Tom Arey

PFP Thrive Academy Director

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1.Introduction

PfP Thrive is committed to ensuring high quality training for your apprentices and learners and appreciates all feedback, positive and negative.

We will regularly seek feedback from learners and employers through continual engagement and progress meetings as well as conducting additional surveys and interviews and collating relevant management information.

Feedback will be recorded through one of the following mechanisms:

- Directly via the person providing the feedback using Microsoft Forms which will then be saved in a password protected folder that is only accessible by the PfP Thrive Academy team;
- Or recorded by a member of the PfP Thrive Academy team which is then countersigned by the relevant party.

We will act upon any feedback provided to make the necessary improvements. These actions will be tracked on a centralised 'Feedback Action Log' which is reviewed and updated by the PfP Thrive Academy Leadership team at the monthly team meetings and/or 121s as appropriate.

If improvements are not satisfactory or in the event you wish to make a formal complaint of our services, we have a formal appeal and complaints procedure.

2. Purpose of the procedure

We will regularly seek feedback from learners and employers through continual engagement and Complainants will be listened to and reassured that their issue is being taken seriously. Appropriate action should be taken to try and resolve any issues and misunderstanding speedily and effectively or to investigate the circumstances in more detail.

PfP Thrive has a staged complaints procedure which aims to resolve concerns swiftly and fairly.

The purpose of the procedure is to investigate complaints in a way that:

- encourages informal resolution of issues and concerns if possible;
- is fair and equitable;
- treats complaints with appropriate levels of seriousness.

3.Scope and responsibility

This procedure covers complaints relating to:

- Any PfP Thrive policy, procedure or process;
- Academic and support services or facilities including our Derby Academy premises, our national hubs, our staff, assessors and systems;
- The conduct or actions of any member of staff within the Places for People group;
- Misleading or inaccurate information regarding academic programmes, fees, services or facilities.

This procedure is not used for:

- Complaints about academic judgements, examination decisions, academic appeals or assessment outcomes, please refer to the PfP Thrive Appeals Policy and Process;
- Appeals against disciplinary actions, please refer to the Places for People Grievance Policy;
- Any kind of bullying as defined in Places for People's Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Whistleblowing; please refer to the Places for People Whistleblowing Policy.

The Director of PfP Thrive has overall responsibility for the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

4. Definitions

PfP Thrive uses the following definitions specific to this procedure:

- a complaint is the expression of a specific concern
- 'days' refers to Monday – Friday
- timescales specified will be adhered to wherever possible but may be extended during seasonal holiday periods. On these occasions the complainant will be notified.

5.Procedure

Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the events or actions (or lack of actions) which have prompted the complaint.

PfP Thrive will not normally consider complaints that are made more than one calendar month after the incident or event complained about. In exceptional circumstances, a complaint may be considered outside this timeline with the agreement of the Director of PfP Thrive.

A complainant may be invited for a meeting as part of any investigation relating to the complaint and may be accompanied by a parent/carer, employer or other representative. Details of any support needs will need to be declared prior to any meeting.

PfP Thrive will make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, to ensure that the complaints procedure is fair, equitable and accessible to all.

Where it is inappropriate or not possible for a learner or other stakeholder to make a complaint, this may be done on their behalf by another person, who has a legitimate interest in the complaint and has the complainant's knowledge and written consent. That interest must be made clear to PfP Thrive.

STAGE 1 (INFORMAL)

1. Every attempt should be made to resolve any complaint on an informal basis in the first instance. Learners should discuss the issue with an appropriate member of staff who may be connected with the complaint. If this is not possible, it may be discussed with any of the following:
 - PfP Thrive Academy Teaching Team
 - PfP Thrive Head of Apprenticeships
 - PfP Thrive Head of Technical and Future Skills
 - Director of PfP Thrive.
2. Any potential concern by an employer or other stakeholder should be raised in the first instance with the relevant manager for the area or service concerned.
3. All members of staff dealing with any informal complaint must endeavour to resolve the issue within 10 working days. This will commence the day after the complaint is logged (to allow for complaints made out of normal working hours).
 - Normal working hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00 – 5.00
 - Working days: Monday to Friday inclusively.
 - If longer time is needed, this should be communicated to the complainant and the agreed outcome logged in relevant documents, in order that a record is maintained.

STAGE 2 (FORMAL)

1. A complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 if it has not been possible to resolve the issue informally.
2. Stage 2 complaints must be made in writing to Tom Arey, Director of PfP Thrive at tom.arey@placesforpeople.co.uk identifying, where possible;
 - The nature of the complaint;
 - If appropriate, the individual against whom the complaint is being made;
 - Independent evidence supporting the case;
 - An indication of the action sought from PfP Thrive Academy.
3. The complaint will be logged and acknowledged in writing within five working days.
4. An appropriate manager will be appointed by the Director of PfP Thrive to investigate the complaint. The complainant will be informed of the progress of the investigation at key points throughout the process.
5. The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement, unless previously stated otherwise. If more time is needed to investigate the complaint, the complainant will be informed and given a revised deadline.

The outcome from the investigation and proposed response will be sent to the Director of PfP Thrive for approval before responding to the complainant. All correspondence relating to a formal complaint at Stage Two must be logged and stored centrally.
6. The response must include one of the following decisions:
 - Dismissal of the complaint as unfounded;
 - Determination that the complaint is trivial and that no further action be taken;
 - Proposal of a resolution to the complaint.

STAGE 3 (APPEALS)

1. A complainant may appeal the outcome of Stage 2 within 10 days. The appeal should clearly state the reasons for the appeal, which may be that:

There is a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the complaint investigation;

There is new evidence to support the complaint that can be substantiated, including extenuating circumstances, which were not known at the time, and may have affected the outcome had it been known and there is valid reason for not making it known at the time.
2. An appeal should be sent to the Director of PfP Thrive in writing (as per previous email details). A response will be issued within 10 working days, where possible.
3. The Director of PfP Thrive will appoint an independent person to review the complaint, and once the investigation has been completed, a report and its findings will be forwarded to the Director of PfP Thrive for approval.

This independent person will be one of the following people:
 - A senior member of the Places for People Group HR leadership team e.g. Senior HR Business Partner
 - A senior member of the Places for People Group Senior Leadership team e.g. Director of Operations, Director of Compliance, Director of Risk, Director of H&S
4. The Director of PfP Thrive will make a decision as to the final outcome of the appeal and recommendations (if any). This will be communicated in writing to any parties involved. This is the final stage of the PfP Thrive's Complaints Procedure.

This will usually be within 15 working days of receipt of our acknowledgement response. If there is a delay, due to the complex nature of a complaint, you will be advised and kept informed of progress.

External Appeals for apprenticeships

If you believe this decision is unreasonable or that PfP Thrive has not followed its procedures, you may refer the matter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. You must contact the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) within 12 months after the issue happened.

Email or post your complaint to the ESFA complaints team:

ESFA complaints team
Customer.Complaints
ESFA@education.gov.uk
Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT.

The ESFA will respond to let you know what will happen next and the process they will follow.

If you're unhappy with the ESFA response you can contact the Department for Education if you're unhappy with how the ESFA has dealt with your complaint.

External Appeal for other learners

If you believe this decision is unreasonable or that PfP Thrive has not followed its procedures, you may refer the matter to the relevant Awarding Body. The Director of PfP Thrive will be able to provide the contact details of the relevant Body.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

All complaints are centrally recorded and monitored and reported through the management reporting system every quarter to review process and outcomes.

7.Contact information

Learners can take advice and support from the PfP Thrive Academy either prior to making a complaint or during the complaints process at:

PfP Thrive Apprenticeship Academy

1 Centro Place

Pride Park

Derby

DE24 8RF

8. Policy review and version control

This Policy will be reviewed annually or in the event of changes in rules or to take into account changes in working practices that may result from incidents.

Date of Publishing | October 2024

Review Date | October 2025

Policy/Process Owner | Apprenticeship Leadership Team

Signed

Tom Arey

Director of PFP Thrive

23/12/2024

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Version Control

Version	Date	Action	Amended by	Reviewed by
V1.0	September 2024	New policy creation	Rebecca Edwards Academy Consultant	Tom Arey PFP Thrive Director
V1.1	October 2024	Updated job titles	Rebecca Edwards Academy Consultant	Tom Arey PFP Thrive Director
V1.2	December 2024	Updated following feedback from MS Consulting	Rebecca Edwards Academy Consultant	Tom Arey PFP Thrive Director
V1.3	May 2025	Rebranded on to new template	Rebecca Edwards Academy Consultant	Tom Arey PfP Thrive Director