



## **AA Teamworks SCITT**

### **Complaints and Grievance Policy** **2024-2025**

Written by	Hollie Lawless
Adopted by	SCITT Board
Monitoring responsibility	SCITT Board
Date	September 2024
This review date	September 2024
Next review date	September 2025

## **Aims**

This policy can be used by current AA Teamworks Trainees, or a Trainee who has completed their training within 12 calendar months of the date of initiating a complaint.

This policy does not cover complaints or queries referred to below:

- Complaints relating to The University of Huddersfield / PGCE
- Complaints relating to decisions made by the Hearing Panel covered by the SCITT's Appeals Policy
- Complaints related to inappropriate behaviour by members of the AA Teamworks staff, Partner Schools or other Trainees which may be dealt with using the AA Teamworks Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

This policy has been produced following the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's "The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals" published in December 2016 ([www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)).

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Trainee Code of Conduct.

## **Definitions**

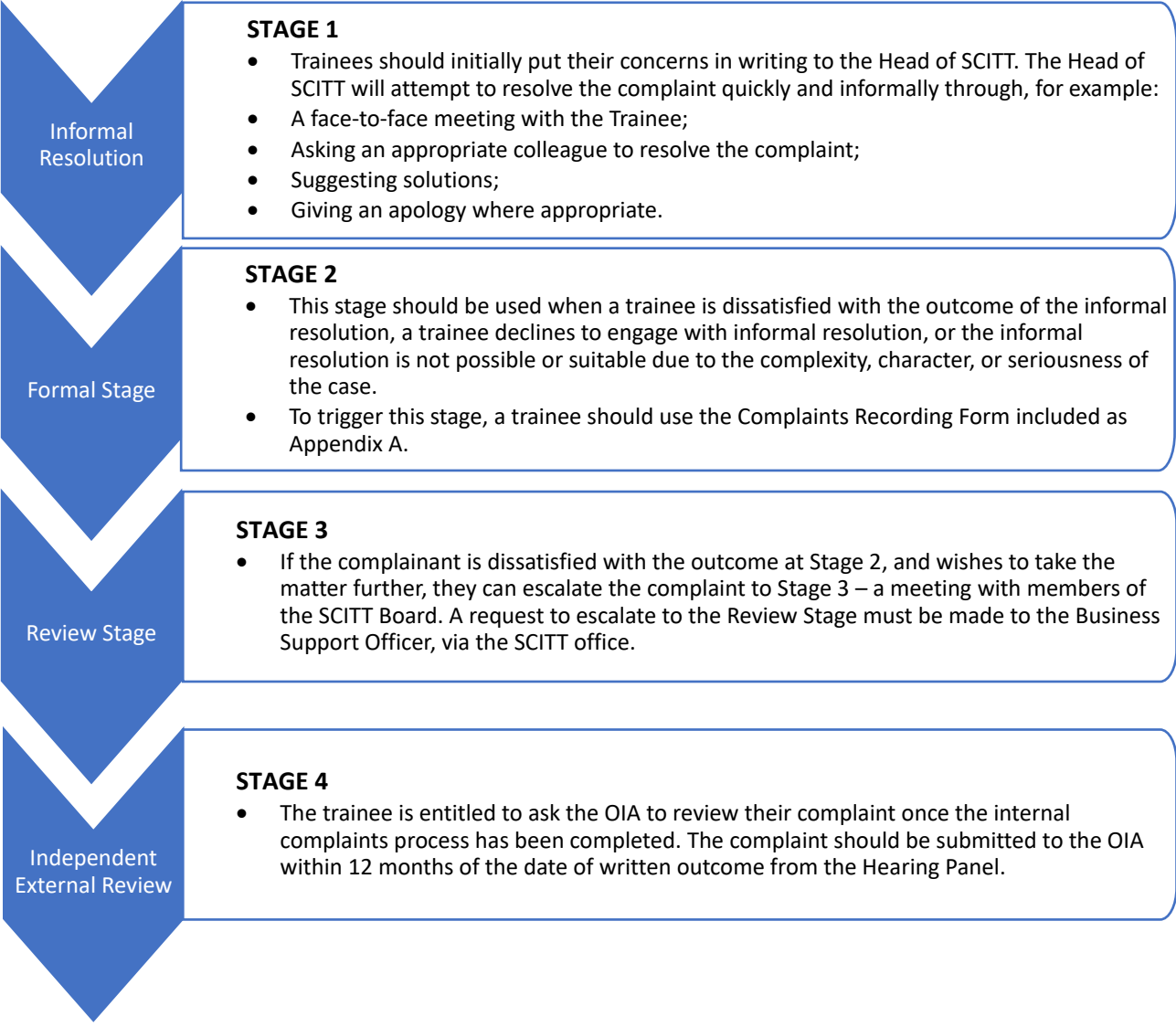
For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as:

"An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider" (OIA 2016).

## **Principles**

- AA Teamworks aims to provide an outstanding training programme for the Trainees it serves.
- AA Teamworks is committed to working in partnership with its Trainees and partner schools, taking account of Trainee views in order to improve its service.
- AA Teamworks will seek to resolve complaints as informally and quickly as possible, including by mediation and conciliation where appropriate.
- AA Teamworks expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- AA Teamworks will work to ensure this policy is used fairly, proportionally and in a timely way.
- AA Teamworks will ensure that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest and that all involved will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality through the process, without causing disadvantage.
- Trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative.
- AA Teamworks will put all the outcomes of any investigation in writing for the Trainee.

**Stages in the Complaints Process**



**Stage 1 - Informal Stage**

Trainees should initially put their concerns in writing to the Head of SCITT. The Head of SCITT will attempt to resolve the complaint quickly and informally through, for example:

- A face-to-face meeting with the Trainee;
- Asking an appropriate colleague to resolve the complaint;
- Suggesting solutions;
- Giving an apology where appropriate.

**Stage 2 - Formal Stage**

Should the issue not be resolved within the Informal Stage or if the issue is of a particularly serious nature, the Head of SCITT will be informed and the complaint will be investigated further. If the complaint is about the Head of SCITT, then the complaint will be heard by the Great Heights Trust CEO.

- The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (email is acceptable however we require a postal address to respond) and will then receive an acknowledgement of the complaint, and will be provided with a timescale for the completion of the investigation and reporting back to them with the outcomes, within 2 working days of receipt of the complaint, there will then be ongoing communication with the complainant in line with the agreed timescales.
- Within this response AA Teamworks will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The SCITT can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.
- An initial trail of evidence will be conducted by the Head of SCITT using the Handling Complaints Form included as Appendix B.
- The Head of SCITT will then make a decision based upon the evidence presented. If the Head of SCITT is unable to make a decision based on the information provided they should instruct further investigations to take place. Once the Head of SCITT is satisfied that they have enough evidence to conclude the complaint, they should write to the complainant detailing any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions AA Teamworks will take to resolve the complaint. The Head of SCITT will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome at the stage 2 Formal Stage.

### **Stage 3 - Review Stage**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a meeting with members of the SCITT Board. A request to escalate to the Review Stage must be made to the Business Support Officer, via the SCITT office, within 15 days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. The email for this submission is [enquiries@teamworksscitt.org](mailto:enquiries@teamworksscitt.org). The SCITT Business Support Officer will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

- The panel can be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of three or five people and will include at least one member that is independent of the management and running of the SCITT.
- The complainant will receive a letter inviting the complainant to the meeting giving 7 days' notice of the meeting, along with any written material that will be reviewed at the hearing.
- The complainant has the right to be accompanied at this meeting.
- A date for a meeting of the complaints panel meeting will be arranged. If the complainant refuses 3 proposed meeting times, without good reason, the Business Support Officer will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

- The panel will nominate their own chair. The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented.

The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- where appropriate, recommend changes to AA Teamworks systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant, AA Teamworks and where relevant, the person complained about, with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, and any recommendations made, in writing within 5 working days. Where appropriate, the letter to the complainant will also advise on their right to submit a complaint to the OIA, the time limit for doing so and where and how to access advice and support with this process.

A record of the panel's decision will be retained by AA Teamworks and will be acted upon accordingly.

#### **Stage 4 - Independent External Review**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they are entitled to ask the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) (OIA), the independent ombudsman service, to review the complaint about the outcome of the SCITT's internal complaints process. The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of written outcome from the Hearing Panel.

#### **Data Protection and Privacy**

AA Teamworks will retain data related to the complaint for 6 years from the start of the complaint and after this time all data will be deleted. All data will be stored securely during this time.

All complaints will be treated confidentially. AA Teamworks will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate the complaint or to respond to the issues raised. In some circumstances data may be used to consider whether a Trainee is fit to practice.

If a Trainee makes a complaint, they should only include any necessary information about third parties. Evidence provided must focus on the impact that a third party has had on the Trainee themselves. For example, if the mitigation is based on the health of a family member, AA Teamworks do not need to see the detailed medical information about that person.

**Appendix A**

<b>Complaints Recording Form</b>	
Name of Complainant	
Trainee's name (if relevant)	
Complainant's relationship to trainee (if applicable)	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
What actions does the complainant want to see to resolve the problem at this stage	
Initial Facts found	
Date	

**Appendix B**

**Handling Complaints Record Form**

Please attach any handwritten original notes, which are dated and signed where possible. Please include the name and role of the person conducting the initial assessment/first evidence trail.

Name of the person making the complaint/expressing concern: .....

Relationship to AA Teamworks: .....

Date of the complaint/concern: .....

How complaint was received: .....

The nature of the allegation/concern

Date: .....

Time: .....

Place/location of incident: .....

Date of alleged incident: .....

Time: .....

Trainee involved: .....

Trainee witness(es) named by complainant: .....

Staff involved: .....

Trainee(s) to be interviewed: .....

**Appendix C**

**Head of SCITT Decision**

Further investigation / action to be taken: **YES / NO**

By: .....

Head of SCITT signed: .....

Date: .....

**Further investigation, follow up and outline action to be taken with:** .....

**Complainant**

- Letter sent?
- Meeting held?

**Trainees**

- Unfounded or malicious allegation?
- Referral?

**Staff**

- Disciplinary meeting/outcome?
- Referral to ISA if dismissal?

Signed: ..... Date: .....