

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Armonia LTD is committed to providing a quality service for all learners, employees, visitors and customers related to the business, including members of the general public, who may make a complaint about any provision of services or facilities that Armonia provide.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of learners, employers and customers. Therefore it is important to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- A complaint is treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response;
- Any complaint is treated seriously - whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, social media, or by email;
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and, where appropriate, informally (for example, by telephone);
- Responses are conducted in the right way: for example, with an explanation, an apology where necessary, or with information on any action to be taken;
- Complaints are learnt from and used to improve services.

Armonia will thoroughly investigate any complaint, whether informal or formal, relating to the day-to-day operation of Armonia and the standards of service we provide. Areas excluded from this policy are:

- Assessment decisions or examination results where other processes are more appropriate
- Employment issues which are covered by Staff Grievance Procedures which is located in the employee handbook.
- Whistleblowing, also located in the employee handbook – see the Whistleblowing Procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Armonia take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, Armonia's formal Complaints Procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within the procedure.

Timeliness and Response

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly, and efficiently as possible, Complaints procedure for Clients, Learners & providers are as follows:

1. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. If a Client or provider should feel the need to complain they should do so by contacting the Head office whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, or by email. All complaints are taken seriously and action will be taken to resolve them as quickly as possible.
2. If a Learner should feel they need to make a complaint they should take steps to talk to their course tutor or learning mentor to try and resolve the situation, if no satisfactory outcome has been achieved it should then be taken to the business manager, wither in person, by telephone, by letter, or by email.
3. Complainants will receive a reply within 48 hours (working days) from when the complaint is received. If this it is not possible to provide a full reply within this time, due to a detailed investigation been required to be carried out, an interim response, explaining actions being taken to deal with the complaint, timescales for next steps and resolution will be given.
4. The full reply will include the outcome and decision of the complaint, what action will be taken if necessary, and also will include details of who to contact next if the complaining believes the complaint has not been dealt with properly.
5. This will normally be the Business manager. If, following that second response, a satisfactory outcome has not been achieved; the complaint can be escalated to the CEO.
6. In the event that a satisfactory response has not been achieved, the complaint will be put forward to their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive officer who will be responsible for making the final decision in responding to the complaint.
7. Complaints are expected to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises (although three months is generally considered to be an acceptable timeframe in which to lodge a complaint); although Armonia will consider exceptions.

Employees

8. If an employee should feel that they need to make a complaint they should firstly discuss this with their line manager or the business manager. If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily then the Grievance Procedure should be invoked, this is located in the employee handbook.

Recording Complaints

- Armonia will comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. It is common practice to ask for complaints to be made by using a complaint form or in writing, however the complainant may have communication preferences due to disability or learning difficulties and providers must allow alternative methods of contact:
- A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing, or by email;
- In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls should be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record.
- Where there are communication difficulties, recording devices may be used to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point;
- Armonia will record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. The Business Manager or CEO has overall responsibility for keeping these records securely and holding them in a central file.
- All staff involved should be aware that complainants have a right to copies.