



Yorkshire
Leadership
Community

Policy: Complaints

Member of Staff Responsible:

Sue Lewis

Policy Approved By:

YLC Steering Group

Approved on:

24.09.2018

Review Date:

2020

(circumstances may require an earlier review)

Signed-off by:

Steering Group Chair:

Janet Sheriff

Date:

24.09.2018

PURPOSE

The purpose of this complaints policy is to provide clear procedures for dealing with complaints made by Participants against Yorkshire Leadership Community (YLC).

SCOPE

- a) This policy can be used by anyone who is a current participant with YLC, or a participant who completed their training with YLC within 6 calendar months of the date of initiating the complaint
- b) This policy does not cover complaints or queries referred to below;
 - Complaints related to requests for deferral to final assessment covered by the YLC's Deferral Policy
 - Complaints related to review of final assessment judgements covered by YLC's Appeals Policy

DEFINITIONS and EXAMPLES

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint as defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more participants about a provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.

Examples of complaints this Policy aims to help resolve include:

- failure by YLC to meet obligations, including those outlined in YLC handbooks and DfE NPQ Accreditation Agreements
- misleading or incorrect information on the YLC website, promotional or other YLC material
- concerns about the delivery of the training programme, teaching or administration including elements provided by YLC partner schools
- poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by YLC
- complaints about partner schools or other organisations providing a service on behalf of YLC.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a) YLC aims to provide outstanding training programmes for the participants it serves
- b) YLC is committed to working in partnership with its participants and partner schools, taking account of participant views in order to improve its service.
- c) YLC will seek to resolve complaints as informally and quickly as possible, including by mediation and conciliation where appropriate
- d) YLC expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- e) YLC will work to ensure this policy is used fairly, proportionally and in a timely way.
- f) YLC 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.
- g) Participants will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, family member, or representative from a Teaching Union or Professional Union.
- h) YLC will put all the outcomes of any investigation in writing for the participant. A Completion of Procedures (COP) letter will be used at 'end points' in the process.

STAGES IN THE PROCESS

There are three potential stages within this policy as follows:

1. Informal Resolution
2. Formal Stage
3. Review Stage

Appendix A provides a flowchart to illustrate the stages of YLC's complaint process. This flowchart includes the timeframe for each stage of the process.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Participants should initially email the YLC Administration outlining their concerns. The YLC Administration will attempt to resolve the complaint quickly and informally and at a local level through, for example:

- a face-to-face meeting with the participant
- asking an appropriate colleague to resolve the complaint
- providing background information or an explanation relevant to the issue
- suggesting solutions
- giving an apology where appropriate.

Stage 2: Formal Stage

This stage should be used when:

- a participant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the early resolution process or
- a participant declines to engage with early resolution
- early resolution is not possible or suitable due to the complexity, character or seriousness of the case

To trigger this stage, a participant should use the Complaint Recording Form included as Appendix B. This should will help participants set out their complaint in a clear and succinct way, referring to evidence relevant to the complaint.

On receipt of this form, YLC staff who have not previously been involved in the case will:

- conduct an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is being dealt with under the right procedures
- determine the scope and purpose of an investigation
- conduct an investigation, which will be proportionate to the complexity and seriousness of the complaint, interviewing the participant and other relevant parties where appropriate
- liaise with the DfE NPQ QA Agent for input if the complaint refers to an NPQ programme
- produce a report based on these investigations which outline;
 - the process followed
 - the information gathered
 - the conclusions drawn
 - any recommendations which will lead to improved provision and/or reduce the chance of similar complaints occurring

- write to the participant setting out the outcome of the formal stage, outlining the reasons for each decision made. This letter will also include information about:
 - the participant's right to take the complaint to the review stage and the grounds for such a referral
 - the time limit for escalating to the review stage
 - the appropriate procedure and support available.
 - where the complaint has been upheld, YLC will explain how and when it will implement any remedy and what the participant can do if s/he remains dissatisfied.

Stage 3: Review Stage (final YLC stage)

If the participant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, he or she can request a review. A review may cover:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable
- any new material evidence that the participant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide at Stage 2.

The review will not:

- re-hear the complaint afresh
- involve a further investigation.

A complaint must have been considered at the formal stage (Stage 2) before it can be escalated to the review stage.

If a complaint reaches this stage, a Review Panel drawn from YLC Steering Group will consider the way in which the complaint was investigated in Stage 2. The participant will be invited in writing to attend a hearing and given 10 days' notice of the hearing date.

- Participants will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, family member, or representative from a Teaching or Professional Union.
- The participant will be provided with information about the composition of the panel, a copy of the evidence to be considered and information about the support that is available to them including contact details.
- The panel will consist of three members of the Steering Group. They will consider the evidence and there will be an opportunity for the participant and investigating officer to make a presentation.
- A record of the meeting will be taken recording the date, people in attendance, a brief summary of the meeting.
- The Panel will consider the following questions:
 - Were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
 - Was the outcome reasonable in the circumstances?
 - Has the participant received clear reasons why the complaint was rejected at the earlier stage?
 - If new material evidence has been provided, has the participant given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

The Review Panel, having considered the material submitted to them may:

1. overturn the outcome of the formal stage and recommend a remedy
2. refer the complaint back to the formal stage for reconsideration
3. uphold the outcome of the formal stage.

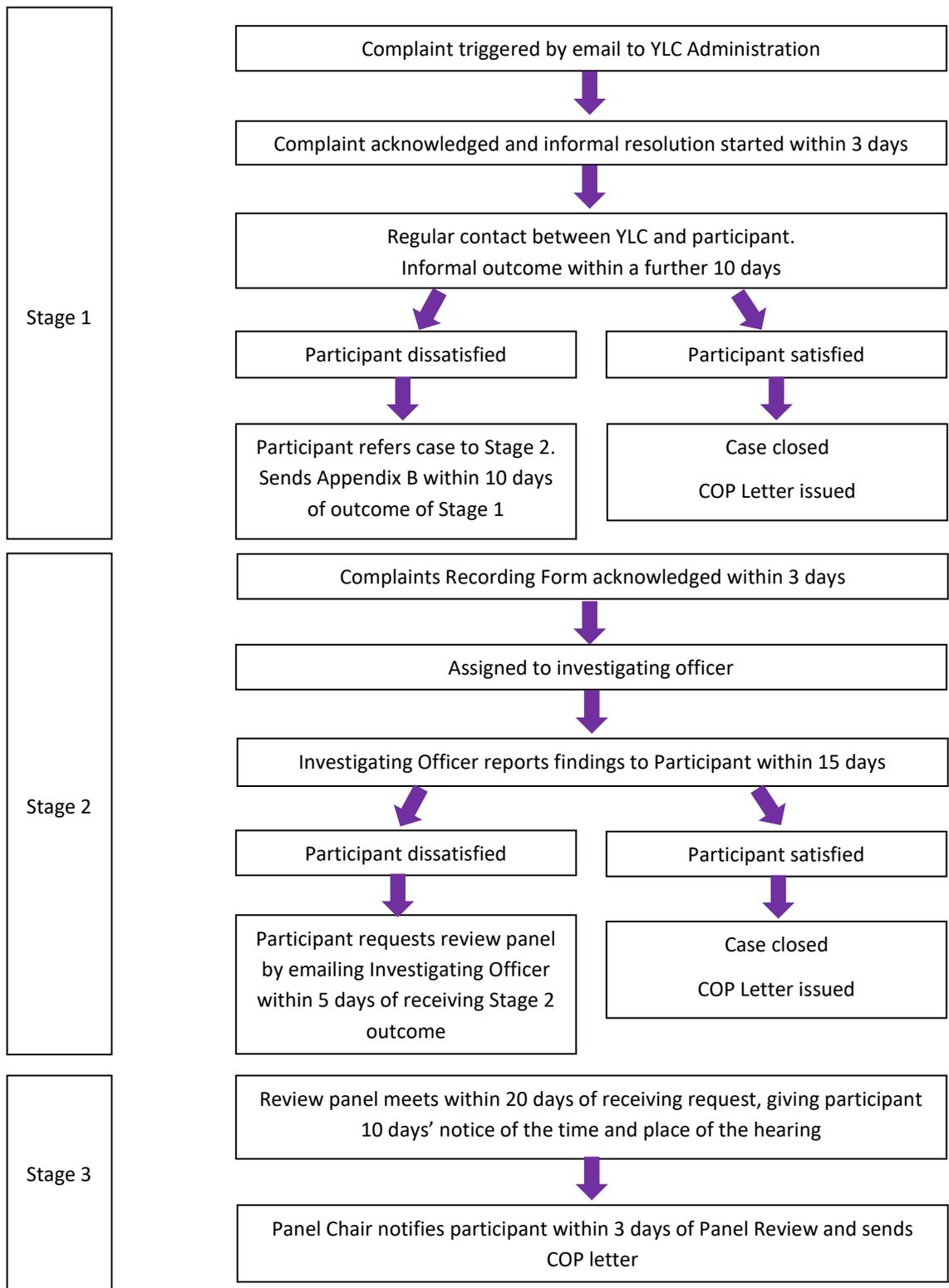
The Chair of the Review Panel will write to the participant with their decision and an outline of the reasons for their decision within three working days of the hearing.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- YLC will retain data related to the complaint for 15 months 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. YLC will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate the complaint or to respond to the issues raised.
- If a participant 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 participant themselves. For example, if the mitigation is based on the health of a family member, YLC do not need to see the detailed medical information about that person.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Flowchart of Yorkshire Leadership Community Complaint Process



Appendix B:

Yorkshire Leadership Community Complaint Recording Form



To be used if Stage 1 informal resolution has failed to provide a satisfactory outcome.

Full Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Contact Tel No

Email Address

YLC Course Course Start Date.....

Please give specific details of your complaint

Please list any evidence which supports your complaint

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature

Date

Official use:

Date acknowledged

By whom

Complaint referred to

Date