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Document Information
Scope: This procedure describes the process PVC should follow on receipt of a complaint from any customers of PVC, or any other individual or member of the public who wishes to make a complaint to PVC. It is non-discriminatory, applied equally, irrespective of any protected characteristic.
Key Objectives: To provide a fair and equitable complaints process, enabling individuals to voice their complaint and have the complaint investigated and resolved fairly.
Retention Schedule: Personal data processed within the complaints process is stored for 7 years. Complaints data will be reviewed on a monthly basis and all personal data which has reached the retention limit will be deleted. In the event that a complaint is subject to an ongoing legal claim the personal data will not be redacted/deleted and will be retained until the matter has been fully resolved.
Legal Basis for Processing: Contractual obligation or legitimate interest depending on the content of the complaint.

Preston Vocational Centre's Complaints Policy Statement and Procedure

Policy Statement

1. Preston Vocational Centre (PVC) always aim to provide high quality services. We recognise that customers may from time to time feel that we have not achieved these standards or met their expectations. We welcome views and feedback on the services we provide and how they have been delivered.
2. PVC will have a clear, easy to follow Complaints Policy Statement and Procedure, including timescales for response and appeal processes.
3. PVC will handle complaints consistently and fairly with clear timescales for acknowledging and responding to complaints with an emphasis on speedy resolution and accountability.
4. PVC will accept complaints in a variety of formats including in writing, by email, by telephone, in person, or via social media.
5. PVC aims to respond to complaints confidentially, effectively, fairly and with empathy. Every complainant will be treated equitably without prejudice or discrimination.
6. PVC aims to provide accessible clear and thorough responses to complaints.
7. As we are engaged by schools and other partner organisations to provide vocational training on a sub-contracted basis, it may be appropriate in certain circumstances for PVC to provide the school headteacher with a copy of the outcome of a complaint.
8. Whilst the complaints procedure is in place for the protection of our users, and to ensure that improvements can be made to our services and standards, we recognise that in circumstances when we are sub-contracted (such as schools) their own

complaints process might be activated as well as, or instead of, our own investigation. In such circumstances we may be obligated to provide evidence from our investigations in support of such a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

9. A complaint can be received in any format from any individual, their representative or member of the public who wishes to make a complaint to PVC
10. If a complaint is received from a representative of a service user, the service user's signed consent will be required prior to personal data being shared with their representative.
11. In the first instance all complaints will be passed to the Centre Manager (or acting Centre Manager) to determine the action to be taken.
12. If the complaint is about an issue that PVC can not respond to (e.g. suspension of a student by the school) then a response should be given within one working day advising the customer who their complaint should be directed to. If the response was verbal, then the offer of confirmation in writing should be made.
13. If the complaint relates to the Centre Manager then the complaint should be forwarded to the Business Assurance Team at Community Gateway Association (CGA) who will arrange for the matter to be investigated by a member of the Senior Management Team (CGA).
14. The Centre Manager or appointed person will carry out an investigation into the complaint. This will involve speaking directly with the complainant and any other relevant persons to gain a full understanding of the facts surrounding the matter.
15. The Centre Manager or appointed person will write a response to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. The letter must include the

following as a final paragraph:

“If in your view Preston Vocational Centre’s response to your complaint is unsatisfactory please contact the Business Assurance Team at Community Gateway Association, Harbour House, Portway, Preston, PR2 2DW within the next ten working days telling us why. The team will then arrange for your complaint to be referred to the appeal stage of the procedure if appropriate”.

16. If it becomes apparent that the complaint can not be responded to within time the complainant should be informed at the earliest opportunity and a revised date of response given. This should only happen in a limited number of circumstances for example where key information is required which has not been provided by a third party.
17. The complainant will be allowed ten working days (from the date of the response) to notify CGA Business Assurance Team if they are dissatisfied with the outcome and would like to request an appeal. If there is no response within this time, the complaint will be closed.
18. If the complainant informs us that they are not satisfied with the response, the Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) will contact the complainant to discuss the reason they feel the response is unsatisfactory.
19. If for any reason the Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) is unavailable, then the Head of Business Assurance (CGA) will act on their behalf.
20. The Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) will arrange for either an acknowledgement letter to be sent to the complainant advising their request for appeal will be processed and providing a brief outline of the procedure; or explaining that the response to their complaint is considered final and the reason why.

21. If the request for the complaint to go to appeal is upheld by the Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) then the appeal process will be followed.

Appeal Process

22. The Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) will arrange for the complainant to be contacted within five working days with a proposed meeting date. The complainant will be offered at least five working days notice of the proposed meeting date.
23. The Appeal Panel will consist of the Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) and one PVC Board Member (not the Chief Executive of CGA). If the complaint is connected with a school pupil, the school Headteacher or their representative, may be invited to join the Appeal Panel.
24. The complainant will be given the opportunity to present their case in person or to have a friend or representative accompany them to speak on their behalf.
25. If the complainant rejects the opportunity to attend the meeting, the appeal meeting will proceed without the complainant being in attendance.
26. Once a meeting date has been agreed the Centre Manager will provide all the relevant paperwork to the Appeal Panel at least five working days before the meeting.
27. The response of the Panel will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and considered final.
28. The Head of Culture and Engagement (CGA) will debrief the relevant staff involved in the complaint regarding the outcome and record any learning points or observations.