



LETTA SCITT and Apprenticeships

Feedback and Complaints policy

Approved & adopted on:	Autumn 2024	To be reviewed:	Autumn 2026
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1. Introduction

LETTA is committed to providing high quality services and learning experiences to all it serves and welcomes feedback about the services provided. We also recognise that things can sometimes go wrong. Learners are entitled to complain if they feel that any service or learning experience is inadequate.

This policy reflects sector best practice and underpins our vision and core values whereby the experience and satisfaction of learners and stakeholders is at the heart of the service offer.

This policy complies with Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements for the handling of complaints and arrangement of appeals within Further Education and Apprenticeships. In circumstances where the LETTA feedback and complaints procedure has been exhausted, appeals can be made directly to the Education and Skills Funding Agency or respective awarding organisation. Further information regarding the contact details of these organisations can be found on their independent websites or requested from the LETTA team.

For complaints relating to the SCITT, this policy reflects best practice as outlined by the Good Practice Framework developed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). LETTA is a member of the OIA. All SCITT trainees can make a formal complaint to the OIA about LETTA and the provider that validates the PGCE, providing the latter is a member of the scheme. The OIA will consider complaints once the internal procedures of providers have been completed. If the PGCE provider is not a member of the OIA, trainees will use the procedures of the partner HEI with close liaison being maintained with LETTA.

2. Scope

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a transparent procedure which clearly outlines how feedback and complaints will be handled by LETTA
- Ensure all complaints are handled sensitively, fairly and with respect for privacy (where requested)
- Resolve problems and concerns quickly and successfully.
- Improve the services of LETTA by acting promptly to action any recommendations provided following the investigation of complaints. In this spirit, LETTA encourages informal resolution of the problem wherever possible.

Feedback and complaints may be submitted by learners, parents/carers/guardians of learners under the age of 18 (or up to the age of

25 for learners with Education, Health and Care Plans), employers, customers, other stakeholders or members of the public.

Complaints may not be made by representatives or a third party. Learner groups are entitled to submit 'collective complaints' and where this is the case, LETTA may ask learners to nominate a group representative.

Complaints are defined by LETTA as any legitimate concern about any matters related to the provision of training or any related service as outlined in LETTA's Partnership Agreement.

Concerns of a serious nature may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Health and safety and safeguarding issues
- Equality and diversity issues
- Breach of confidentiality
- Theft or damage to personal property
- Staff conduct

3. Key responsibilities

The **CEO/Accounting Officer** is the staff member with the overall responsibility for complaints and reports to the Board of Trustees and the LETTA Strategic Board.

The **Complaints Officer** will receive complaints in the first instance. These must be in writing and should use the formal complaints form (Appendix A).

The Director of School Improvement will appoint an **Investigating Officer** to oversee the investigation of the complaint.

If a complaint is not resolved at stage 1, the **Director of School Improvement** will oversee the investigation of the complaint at stage 2.

If a complaint is not resolved at stage 2, the **CEO/Accounting Officer** will convene a Complaints Panel to consider the complaint at stage 3.

Beyond stage 3, an **Independent External Reviewer** would be appointed to oversee investigation of the complaint.

Complaints can be referred to the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education** (OIA) or **ESFA** once internal procedures have been followed.

4. Principles - Feedback

This policy is designed to support and improve the LETTA offer. LETTA values feedback, both positive and negative, and sees this as vital to improve its services and drive success.

Feedback is defined as any comment provided about the service or experience of learners, employers, parents/carers/guardians or other stakeholders, which is used as a basis for recognising good practice or making improvements. Feedback can be provided verbally or formally, in writing, to any member of staff.

On receipt of feedback LETTA will:

- Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback
- Pass on any compliments to individual staff members and their manager and ensure the good work of staff is recognised
- Share best practice to continue to improve services across the organisation
- Investigate any suggestions about how improvements can be made and where possible and appropriate, act quickly to implement these.

5. Principles – Complaints

A complaint is defined as a statement that services are unsatisfactory or that action, or lack of action, taken by LETTA is unacceptable.

On receipt of a complaint LETTA will:

- Endeavour to listen carefully to all concerns raised within a reasonable amount of time
- Respect privacy if requested
- Operate fairly and sensitively
- Maintain accurate and detailed records and keep all parties updated as to the progress of the matter being dealt with
- Take action where appropriate
- Ensure no staff member is discriminated against as a result of making a complaint

5.1 Confidentiality

- 5.1.1** All complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to confidentiality for both learners and staff. Data collected as part of a complaint will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant LETTA policies.

5.1.2 No learner bringing a complaint under this procedure, whether successful or otherwise, will be treated less favourably by any member of staff than if the complaint had not been brought. If evidence to the contrary is found in this regard, then LETTA will bring this to the attention of the relevant employers of the member of staff involved.

5.1.3 Any person named in a complaint will be informed of the substance of the complaint and will have a right of reply as part of the investigation. Information contained within the complaint will be made available only to the members of staff involved in its resolution.

5.2 Vexatious or mischievous complaints

5.2.1 Any complaint found to be vexatious or mischievous may result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

5.3 Anonymous complaints

5.3.1 Complaints require investigation to enable resolution. Where a complaint is made anonymously it will not be possible to undertake such an investigation. For practical reasons therefore, normally no action will be taken in the event of complaints made anonymously. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where LETTA deems it appropriate to take action or investigate a matter on the basis of an anonymous complaint. Any decision to do so must be agreed by the CEO/Accounting Officer, in consultation with the Director of School Improvement. If the anonymous complaint is against the Director of School Improvement, then the CEO/Accounting Officer will consult with the next most senior member of staff and vice versa.

5.4 Group action

5.4.1 Complaints will normally be brought by individuals, but where complaints address an identified common issue, a response may be made with agreement from all parties to the group, or its representative.

5.5 Timescale

5.5.1 Complaints must normally be made within one month of the pertinent event.

5.5.2 Failure by the recipient of a complaint at any stage to respond within the timescale set out within the following procedure shall

give the complainant the automatic right to request to proceed to the subsequent stage.

5.5.3 Failure of the complainant to meet the timescale without good cause shall result in the automatic termination of the complaint.

5.5.4 Timescales may, in exceptional circumstances, be extended by the Investigating Officer. The complainant will be informed.

5.6 Documentation

5.6.1 Complainants must provide appropriate documentation when submitting a complaint.

5.6.2 Recipients of a complaint under this procedure must record its existence and outcome with the Complaints Officer.

5.6.3 Documentary evidence will be kept during and after the procedure and will be destroyed in accordance with LETTA policy and procedures.

6. Informal complaints procedure

6.1 Wherever possible and appropriate learners with a complaint should in the first instance seek an informal resolution. A learner with a complaint should raise it directly with a relevant member of staff in order that wherever possible it can be resolved immediately.

6.2 Although informal, the complaint and action taken should be recorded and retained by the member of staff dealing with the complaint. A copy should be forwarded to the Director of School Improvement.

6.3 Should an informal approach prove ineffective or inappropriate then the formal procedure detailed below should be invoked.

7. Formal complaints procedure

7.1 Stage 1

7.1.1 Complaints must be in writing and should use the formal complaints form (Appendix A) and be sent to LETTA's Complaints Officer (contact details can be found in Appendix B).

- 7.1.2** Complaints must normally be made within one month of the pertinent event.
- 7.1.3** On receipt of the complaint, the Complaints Officer will forward the complaint to the Director of School Improvement who will appoint an Investigating Officer to oversee the investigation of the complaint. The Investigating Officer will ensure that a written acknowledgement of the complaint will normally be received within ten working days of its receipt. This will indicate the likely timescale in which the complaint will be investigated. It will also state who will undertake the investigation. A response should normally be received within one calendar month from receipt of the complaint. If for any reason this timescale cannot be met, the complainant will be notified in writing and informed of the reason and of the revised timescale for the investigation.
- 7.1.4** The Investigating Officer should normally meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative of their choice.
- 7.1.5** Should the response received at Stage 1 fail to satisfy the complainant, Stage 2 of the complaints procedure may be evoked. The complainant must normally do this within 10 working days of the date of the response from the Investigating Officer.

7.2 Stage 2

- 7.2.1** The complainant should notify the Complaints Officer in writing of their dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage 1. The complaint will be forwarded to the Director of School Improvement.
- 7.2.2** A written acknowledgement to the complainant from the Director of School Improvement will normally be received within ten working days of its receipt. This will indicate the likely timescale in which the complaint will be investigated. A response to the complaint should normally be received within one calendar month from receipt of the complaint. If for any reason this timescale cannot be met, the complainant will be notified in writing and informed of the reason and of the revised timescale for the investigation.
- 7.2.3** The Director of School Improvement will investigate the complaint at this stage. They should normally meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative of their choice.

- 7.2.4** Should the response received at Stage 2 fail to satisfy the complainant, Stage 3 of the complaints procedure may be invoked. The complainant must normally do this within 10 working days of the date of the response.

7.3 Stage 3

- 7.3.1** If a complainant is still not satisfied with the response, they have received at Stage 2, the complainant should express this in writing to the Complaints Officer within 10 working days of the date of response. The Complaints Officer will forward a copy to the CEO/Accounting Officer who will then be responsible for establishing a panel to hear the complaint.

7.4 Complaints panel: membership

- 7.4.1** A panel of three people, none of whom have had any dealings with the complaint at the previous levels (formal or informal), will investigate the complaint. Panel membership should take account of equality issues such as gender and ethnicity.
- 7.4.2** The panel will include two members of the LETTA Strategic Board, one of whom will chair the panel, and a member of staff associated with LETTA selected by the CEO/Accounting Officer.
- 7.4.3** Either party to the complaint shall be given the opportunity in advance to deselect any member of the panel for good reason.

7.5 Complaints panel: conduct

- 7.5.1** The panel should normally meet to consider the complaint within 21 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 7.5.2** The panel will investigate the complaint where both parties to the complaint and their representatives (if desired) will be invited to present evidence, call witnesses (previously named), and question those giving evidence.
- 7.5.3** All files and documentation pertinent to the case will be made available to all parties within the constraints of the '1998 Data Protection Act' and subsequent relevant legislation, such as GDPR.
- 7.5.4** Following the hearing, the panel will report its findings to the CEO/Accounting Officer. It will have the authority to make recommendations to the CEO/Accounting Officer as to the appropriate outcome of the complaint.

- 7.5.5** Normally within 21 working days of the complaint being considered by the Panel, the CEO/Accounting Officer will provide a written response to the complainant, including the reasoning behind the decision and any remedy.

7.6 External redress

- 7.6.1** If the response to the complaint is still not acceptable to the complainant, redress may be sought from an Independent External Reviewer recognised within these procedures.
- 7.6.2** The recognised external person or body shall review the way in which the case has been handled and the decision that has been taken.
- 7.6.3** The complainant at this stage should submit the original complaint and all documentary evidence relating to their case, directly to the Independent External Reviewer, copying all documentation to the Complaints Officer for information, normally within twenty-one days of being informed of the outcome of Stage 3.
- 7.6.4** The Independent External Reviewer will report the final outcome of the review normally within a further twenty-eight days to the Accounting Officer for action as appropriate, as well as formally to the complainant.

7.7 Judicial review

- 7.7.1** If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may have recourse to judicial review.
- 7.7.2** All SCITT trainees can make a formal complaint to the OIA about LETTA and the provider that validates the PGCE, providing the latter is a member of the scheme. The OIA will consider complaints once the internal procedures of providers have been completed. If the PGCE provider is not a member of the OIA, trainees will use the procedures of the partner HEI with close liaison being maintained with LETTA.
- 7.7.3** All apprentices can make an appeal directly to the Education and Skills Funding Agency or respective awarding organisation in circumstances where the LETTA feedback and complaints procedure has been exhausted.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 Responsibility for the management and operation of the Complaints Procedure resides with the Director of School Improvement, who will oversee the tracking of complaints progressed through the procedure and will ensure that records show the nature of the complaint, how it was dealt with, the time taken for each part and the outcome. All data held will be monitored in accordance with LETTA's equal opportunities policies. If the complaint is against the Director of School Improvement, then a person nominated by the CEO/Accounting Officer will manage the complaint procedure.
- 8.2 The Complaints Procedure is one aspect of LETTA's quality assurance procedures. Complaints are therefore considered as useful feedback and, where appropriate, will be used to facilitate improvements to services and facilities. This will be achieved through annual reporting to the LETTA Strategic Board.
- 8.3 This procedure will be subject to an annual review, or sooner where new legislation, regulations or codes of practice are introduced.

Appendix A – Formal Complaints Form

Complete all sections below and send this form to the Complaints Officer (see Appendix B)

Complainant details			
Name			
Contact details			
Course (if relevant)			
Date complaint submitted			
Informal procedure			X
Have you already raised the concerns informally in the first instance?			Yes
			No
If yes, please state the names of staff members involved with the informal procedure and the date the concern was raised.			
Complaint			
<i>Outline below a factual statement of circumstances related to the complaint and/or attach a separate sheet securely to this document.</i>			
Redress sought			
<i>Outline below.</i>			
If applicable, indicate any additional documentation attached.			
Signed (complainant)		Date:	

FOR USE BY COMPLAINTS OFFICER & INVESTIGATING OFFICER

Stage 1	
Date received by Complaints Officer (CO)	
Date received by Investigating Officer (IO)	
Name of IO	
Position of IO	
Date acknowledgement letter sent to Complainant	
Action taken	
Outcome of Stage 1 (including letter to complainant and date completed)	
Return all documents to Complaints Officer on completion of Stage 1.	

Stage 2	
Date received by Complaints Officer (CO)	
Date received by Investigating Officer (IO)	
Name of IO	
Position of IO	Director of School Improvement
Date acknowledgement letter sent to Complainant	
Action taken	
Outcome of Stage 2 (including letter to complainant and date completed)	
Return all documents to Complaints Officer on completion of Stage 2.	

Stage 3	
Date received by Complaints Officer (CO)	
Date received by Investigating Officer (IO)	
Name of IO	
Position of IO	CEO/Accounting Officer
Date acknowledgement letter sent to Complainant	
Action taken	
Include the names of those convened to the Panel and identify the Chair.	
Outcome of Stage 2 (including findings of the Panel letter to complainant, and date completed)	
Return all documents to Complaints Officer on completion of Stage 3.	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Stage 1: Documents completed and returned			
Signed:		Date:	
Stage 2: Documents completed and returned			
Signed:		Date:	
Stage 3: Documents completed and returned			
Signed:		Date:	

Appendix B – Contact details

Complaints Officer

Rabea Begum, Clerk to the LETTA Steering Board

rbegumpa@letta.org.uk

Investigating Officer

The IO will be appointed by the Director of School Improvement. Normally, it will be the Programme Leader for the SCITT or Professional Learning.

Anna Beresford, Programme Leader for Initial Teacher Training

aberesford@letta.org.uk

Helen Ruskin, Programme Leader for Professional Learning

hruskin@letta.org.uk

Bygrove Primary School

Bygrove Road

London E14 6DN

Director of School Improvement

Ben Sperring

Bygrove Primary School

Bygrove Road

London E14 6DN

bsperring@letta.org.uk

CEO/Accounting Officer

Jo Franklin

Bygrove Primary School

Bygrove Road

London E14 6DN

jfranklin@letta.org.uk

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

Tel: 0118 959 9813

Website: www.oiahe.org.uk

OIA Second Floor,
Abbey Wharf
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk

Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT