Complaints and Grievance Policy

Approved by: Strategic Committee	**Date:** 7/06/2021
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Next review due by:	Under regular review - subject to changes in law and ESFA requirements

Complaints and grievance policy

Aims and values

EAST SCITT is committed to ensuring a high-quality experience for all stakeholders. This policy outlines the procedures for raising complaints and grievances, ensuring they are dealt with promptly, fairly, and transparently.

Grounds for submission of a complaint
Complaints can be submitted on the following grounds:

- Quality of teaching or training provision.
- Misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by EAST SCITT staff or other trainees.
- Administrative errors or failures.
- Unfair treatment or discrimination.

This information is made available to all in the partnership, ensuring clarity and accessibility via our website.

Definition of complaints and grievances

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about the quality of services provided, including teaching, administrative processes, and support.
- **Grievance:** A formal allegation of unfair treatment or violation of rights, often related to employment conditions or specific incidents involving staff or trainees.

Timeline for handling complaints

- Acknowledgment: Within 3 working days of receipt.
- Initial response: Within 10 working days of acknowledgment.
- Full investigation and resolution: Within 30 working days of initial response.

These timelines are designed to be reasonable and practicable, allowing all parties sufficient time to present information.

Representation and advocacy

- **Advocates:** Complainants may bring a colleague, friend, or union representative to any meetings or hearings related to their complaint or grievance.
- **Union Representation:** Allowed at all stages of the grievance process.
- **Legal Representation:** Permitted during formal grievance hearings and appeals.

Leadership and management

The EAST SCITT Strategic Committee is responsible for:

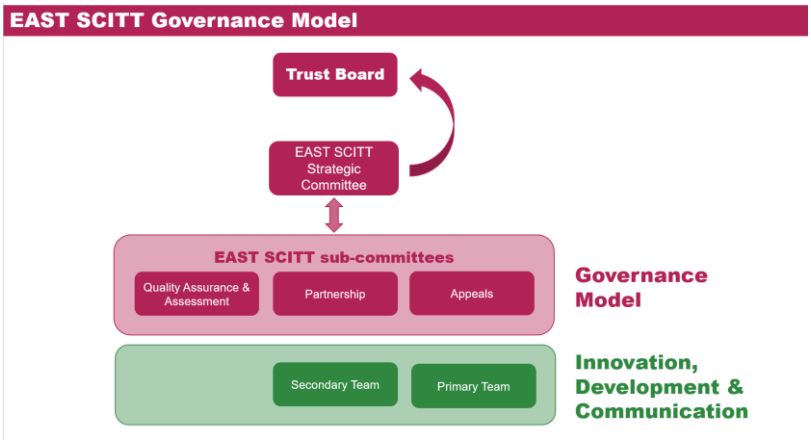
- Ensuring that the policy is working in practice
- Directing the work of the Partnership sub committee in the monitoring and collation of data relating to complaints or grievances.
- Monitoring the success of the policy
- Identifying and remedying failures of the policy

The SCITT Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of the policy and procedures
- Ensuring all teachers in training are aware of the policy and its contents
- Implementation of the policy where the complaint or grievance is about a school-based matter
- Recording and reporting failures of the policy to Strategic Committee

The chair of the Partnership sub committee is responsible for:

- Implementation of the policy where the complaint is about a programme or programme management matter
- Recording and reporting failures of the policy to Strategic Committee.



Process

If a trainee is dissatisfied with any aspect of the course, the Partnership sub committee should be informed as soon as possible. We are committed to supporting teachers and will deal with any complaint or grievance in a professional manner. We recognise that it may be difficult for a trainee to complain about the programme or placement schools as they may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable. However, they are able to do this via the programme elected representatives as well as the regular pastoral phone calls the trainee will have with their SCITT tutor.

Often an informal chat with a member of the central team can resolve a concern but, sometimes this will not suffice, and the complainant may feel the need to take matters further. If at any point over the training year, a trainee wishes to make a formal complaint, trainees can proceed by completing a formal complaint form and submitting it to the Primary Lead, Secondary Lead or SCITT Director. The Partnership sub committee will be kept up to date with how the complaint or grievance is managed by the central team, how it escalates and how it is finally resolved.

If the complainant is unhappy with outcome of the initial response with the relevant Primary or Secondary Lead, the formal complaint or grievance will be escalated and referred to the SCITT Director who will take responsibility for interviewing the complainant and investigating the complaint or grievance fully. If there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint, or the complaint is trivial or malicious in nature, the process will be terminated. The complainant will receive a written response from the SCITT Director within 30 days of the initial response as to the outcome of the investigation.

If there is sufficient evidence for the complaint or grievance to be upheld, the matter will be referred to Strategic Committee who will appoint an Independent Appeals Panel which will be composed of a member of

the Partnership sub committee, a school mentor and a member of the Strategic Committee. To ensure sufficient separation of involvement, different levels of leadership are designated to handle each escalation stage.

The Independent Appeals Panel will consider all the evidence and advise the complainant of the outcome in a Completion of Procedures letter. If the complainant feels that the outcome is not satisfactory then the complainant has the right to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The OIA **must receive** a complainant's formal complaint form **within three months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

Where a complaint or grievance is made about a member of staff from a partnership school, the SCITT Director will liaise with the school's HR department and relevant personnel, in order to establish whether EAST SCITT or the school are best placed to oversee the complaint through to its resolution.

Monitoring

- The Partnership sub committee overseas the complaint or grievance from the submission of the initial complaint through to its resolutions.
- The Strategic Committee will monitor implementation of the policy through a half-termly report from the SCITT Director.
- Minutes of the Partnership sub committee and Strategic Committee will be held centrally by EAST SCITT and circulated to members.

Development and training

The Partnership sub committee will identify changes in training needs through analysis of complaints data. The Strategic Committee will direct the SCITT Director to address and propose solutions to any issues arising from failure in policy or procedures.

Confidentiality and data protection

All complaints and grievances are handled confidentially, with information shared only with those directly involved in the investigation and resolution. Data protection laws are strictly adhered to throughout the process.

This policy ensures a clear, fair, and structured process for handling complaints and grievances, promoting a positive and supportive environment for all members of our training provider community.

Publishing policy

This Policy will be available through the EAST SCITT website and our documentation. A copy is available from the SCITT office.

Review date for the policy

This Policy will be reviewed and agreed by the Strategic Committee every two years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Feedback from all parties involved in the complaints and grievance process is considered in these reviews.