

Policy Statement

Step Ahead and its delivery partners are committed to providing a high-quality service to all of our customers. Our approach to quality is centred around meeting the individual needs of our learners, partner organisations, funders, employees and any other customers, ensuring that they are satisfied with the service they receive. Through the implementation of our comprehensive Quality Improvement Policy we continually monitor and adjust our services as we strive to be the best.

We are dedicated to:

- continually improve the quality of our products and service delivery to meet the needs of our customers,
- continually developing the effectiveness of the systems and processes that support our delivery,
- developing our staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to provide a quality service,
- creating a culture of continuous improvement across our organisation and within our subcontractors,
- listening to our customers and focussing on their needs,
- complying with recognised quality standards and best practice within the industry.

This policy is underpinned by our mission of being seen as a provider of high-quality services to clients, suppliers, funders, agents and partners in the delivery of educational services, empowering people to create a better future for themselves.

Step Ahead welcomes all feedback both positive and negative as this helps to identify how we continually need to improve.

Step ahead is always pleased to receive compliments as it is nice to know that our service has made a positive contribution to someone and that we are appreciated. This is a good way of measuring our performance and allows us to praise our delivery team as we work to improve our service.

However; we fully recognise that on occasions and individual or organisation may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of the service/support they have received from Step Ahead. When this happens, it is important that you have the opportunity to raise this issue with us to enable us to respond and address this as quickly as possible.

If you wish to make a compliment or a complaint the please follow the process detailed below:

Compliments

In our commitment to providing a high-quality service we like to hear that this is being achieved. If you feel you have received a first-class service or a positive outcome from your engagement with Step Ahead, we would encourage you to let us know by providing feedback as to what we did well that supported you in meeting your goals

You can pay Step Ahead a compliment either by:

- Writing to the Quality Assurance Manager at 235 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7LE
- e-mailing

- by completing the attached feedback form (see Appendix 1) and returning to the address provided

We will use your feedback to:

- Inform Step Ahead continuous improvement monitoring that we are meeting our high-quality standards
- To support the evidence in our annual self-assessment process where we notify the educational Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted how we are meeting these external quality assurance regimes
- To cascade this good practice across all areas of our business operation
- To identify ways in which we might change our policies and procedures
- To provide feedback to our staff how their work is being appreciated by our customers

Complaints

There will be occasions where you as an individual or an organisation may feel that the service, we have provided has not met your expectations. A complaint can be made about as Step Ahead process or Policy or about the behaviour or actions carried out by Step Ahead staff, an assessment decision, the actions of other learners and or employers towards you or other individuals that is deemed to have caused significant disadvantage

In these circumstances you might want to raise a complaint.

You can make a compliment to Step Ahead either by:

- Writing to the Quality Assurance Manager at 235 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7LE
- e-mailing
- by completing the attached feedback form (see Appendix 1) and returning to the address provided

Informal Complaints

The most satisfactory way to resolve a complaint is often by direct discussion between the person who feels aggrieved and the person who seems to have given offence. Step Ahead will always try to resolve a complaint through informal methods in the first instance. As many complaints often arise from a misunderstanding leading to dissatisfaction, the best place to start, is to discuss with the person/manager or department whose actions have led to you not being happy with our service. Once you explain to the person concerned what the problem is there is often a simple explanation which can provide an answer or solution to the problem identified.

Formal Complaints

Where it becomes apparent that your complaint can not be resolved through an informal process, then it is important that you raise a formal complaint as soon as possible

Even though the procedure is formal and may result in serious action against an offender if upheld, formal complaints will be dealt with in a sympathetic way, respecting the dignity of all concerned.

When making a complaint please refer to any Step Ahead relevant policies and procedures

If you wish to make a complaint but are unsure about the process, please discuss with your personal tutor, learning coach, mentor, centre manager who will be able to advise you of the exact procedure to follow.

What will happen next?

1. We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within three days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure.
2. We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve passing your complaint to the Operations Manager, who will review your complaint and speak to the member of staff who acted for you. The Operations Manager will then invite you to a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. S/he will do this within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
3. Within three days of the meeting, the Operations Manager will write to you to confirm what took place and any solutions s/he has agreed with you.
4. If you do not want a meeting or it is not possible, the Operations Manager will send you a detailed written reply to your complaint, including his/her suggestions for resolving the matter, within 21 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.
5. At this stage, if you are still not satisfied, you should contact us again and we will arrange for an independent adviser, to review the Operations Managers decision.
6. We will write to you within 14 days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.
7. We record the details of all complaints made and use these as part of our annual quality assurance process to identify improvements to our service

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.

Tips for staff dealing with complaints for staff and customers

To be effective in a resolution discussions should be:

- Calm, with no raised voices or inflammatory language
- Specific, with the grounds for complaint clearly stated and referring to the appropriate IWA policy
- Un-Confrontational, it may be that the offence, whilst real, was unintentional and a simple apology would suffice to lay matters to rest
- Constructive, seeking ways to avoid future difficulties
- An informal approach is most likely to work where the people concerned are of broadly equal status (for example, they are both learners) or they know each other well (for example, learner and tutor). The presence of a third person who is neutral in the dispute

may help in its resolution. Where a complaint concerns a serious matter – violent bullying, racial abuse or discrimination by a member of staff against a learner, for example – it should always be dealt with formally.

- Even though the procedure is formal and may result in serious action against an offender if upheld, formal complaints will be dealt with in a sympathetic way, respecting the dignity of all concerned
- Discussions with those under the age of 18 must comply with the relevant Safeguarding Policy

Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance Manager keeps a status log of all compliments, as well as complaints received. All responses to complaints must be copied to the Managing Director. The Managing Director and Quality Assurance Manager meets with the Management Team to review compliments and complaints and provides a summary of compliments and complaints to the Board of Directors. This information will also be used to inform Step Ahead's annual Self-Assessment Report. The Board of Directors receives and considers an annual report presented by the Managing Director.

Related Policies

Quality Improvement Policy

Equality & Diversity Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Malpractice Policy

Data Protection GDPR Policy

Appendix 1

Step Ahead Feedback Form

Compliment / Complaint (please delete as appropriate)

Step Ahead is committed to providing high quality services for our learners, employers, employees and any other customers. We welcome this feedback to help us to improve Quality. Please complete this form, including as much information as possible.

Please note that staff are under an obligation not to allow a complaint by a learner to have any bearing on the way that the learner is treated or assessed.

Name:	Date:
Address:	
Postcode:	
Contact Telephone Number:	
Contact Email:	
Course:	
Please set out clearly the nature and origin of your compliment/complaint	
Please continue overleaf if necessary	
If a complaint, please describe the steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally. If this has not been possible, or the outcome is not satisfactory, please explain why.	
Please continue overleaf if necessary	
Signature of person making compliment/complaint:	

Please return this form in a sealed envelope to your trainer or by post to:

Quality Assurance Manager
 235 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7LE

The information provided on this form will be stored and processed under the Data Protection Act 1998

Step Ahead
 Compliments and Complaints Policy
 VERSION 1 – July 2019