Hampshire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

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HAMPSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST DELIVERED APPRENTICESHIPS:

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY PROCESS



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Context

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (*HHFT*) delivers apprenticeship programmes through the Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Team (*The Apprenticeship Team*) to its own staff and those employed by other organisations.

We are committed to delivering productive and enjoyable learning experiences that are safe, high quality and fit for purpose.

This policy process sets out how individual complaints and appeals will be managed and resolved in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

Scope

Complaint

A complaint under this process is an expression of **dissatisfaction** related to an apprenticeship programme where this has been delivered by the Apprenticeship Team at HHFT. Complaints can be made by apprentices, managers or employers.

Appeal

An appeal under this process is an expression of **disagreement** by an apprentice regarding an assessment decision made by the Apprenticeship Team or an Independent Assessment Organisation contracted by us.

Out of scope

If you are an apprentice on a programme being delivered by another training provider, you should follow their procedures. The Apprenticeship Team can support you with this if you are employed by HHFT.

Guiding Principles

The Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Team will:

- Handle complaints or appeals promptly and fairly, and assign the most relevant member of the team to resolve the issue
- Acknowledge complaints or appeals in writing within two working days
- Record and monitor correspondence and discussions regarding any complaint or appeal
- Resolve your complaint or appeal and provide a written response within the timescales below. If it is not possible to resolve within the period, we will advise you in writing of the reason for the delay and the expected date of resolution.
- Undertake a post-complaint/appeal review to ensure we are working to continuously improve our services
- Provide you with feedback on the outcome of the complaint or appeal

All complaints and appeals are overseen by the Associate Director of Apprenticeships and Widening Participation and reported to our internal Quality Team for quality assurance and lessons learnt.

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Section 1: Making a complaint

Overview

Making a complaint

- If you have a complaint or concern about an apprenticeship programme, you should normally raise this in the first instance with the relevant Tutor or Facilitator. If this is not appropriate, you can contact the Apprenticeship Team by email at apprenticeships@hhft.nhs.uk or by calling 01962 825319. Your enquiry will be referred to the most appropriate team member to help resolve the issue.

Documenting

- All complaints will be fully documented by the person responsible for resolving the issue, with supporting evidence recorded where appropriate. Investigations and outcomes will be reported to the relevant Apprenticeship Lead.

Formal Process

- We aim to resolve complaints informally and as quickly as possible through your main Apprenticeship Team contact, usually your Tutor. If this is not possible, your complaint will be managed through a formal process by an Apprenticeship Lead (Stage 1). If the matter remains unresolved, it will be escalated to the Associate Director of Apprenticeships and Widening Participation (Stage 2).

Complaints cannot be accepted for investigation if:

- The rationale for the complaint is unclear
- You don't share relevant dates, times and other details necessary for assessing the complaint.

Timeline



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Stage 1: Apprenticeship Lead investigation and resolution

Raise the complaint in writing to a member of the Apprenticeship Team or to apprenticeships@hhft.nhs.uk within four weeks of the issue occurring. The sooner the concern is raised, the better.

- Clearly explain what the problem is and what outcome you are seeking.
- The Apprenticeship Lead will carry out an investigation and try to resolve the complaint.
- If the investigation will take longer than two weeks, you will be informed of the reason and an expected date of response.
- If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1, you can escalate your complaint to stage 2 with an explanation in writing to the Apprenticeship Lead.

Useful to know:

You may contact the relevant Awarding Organisation, Regulatory Body and/or Funding Partner at any point in the process where relevant.

You can also complain to the Department for Education (DfE) about how your complaint was handled: https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship.

Stage 2: Escalation to the Associate Director of Apprenticeships and Widening Participation

If you wish to escalate your complaint to Stage 2, inform us in writing to apprenticeships@hhft.nhs.uk within four weeks of being notified of the Stage 1 outcome and label it **Stage 2 Complaint**.

Please provide a clear explanation of how you attempted to resolve their complaint at Stage 1:

- Include a specific date, the name of the member of staff you reported the complaint to and why it was not resolved to your satisfaction at Stage 1.
- It would also be helpful to include, one or more of these types of evidence: a timeline of events, reference to relevant policies, procedures and/or regulations, letters, emails, reports by professionals, witness statements, screenshots, feedback from the Stage 1 investigation.
- Clearly reference, label and submit any additional evidence at the same time as submitting your Stage 2 Complaint.
- Stage 2 complaints will be escalated formally through the Apprenticeship Quality Team to the Associate Director of Apprenticeships and Widening Participation. The AD will investigate further and try to resolve.
- You should expect to receive a written response within four weeks of submitting the Stage 2 Complaint. If the investigation will take longer than four weeks, you will be informed of the reason and an expected date of response.

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Other types of complaints

The Apprenticeship Team will support you if you have a complaint against other parties involved in your apprenticeship:

Complaint about a subcontractor:

- As Lead Provider, we are primarily responsible for resolving a complaint against a subcontractor (for example, related to your functional skills classes or apprenticeship delivery by one of our partners or speakers).
- In the first instance, you should discuss your concern with them (e.g. your functional skills tutor). If you are not satisfied with the solution, you can follow the process above by contacting apprenticeships@hhft.nhs.uk.

Complaint against your employer:

- If you have a complaint that your employer (usually your manager) is not meeting the commitments they signed in the Apprenticeship Agreement and Training Plan, talk to your tutor in the first instance.
- We will discuss possible options with you which may include us escalating through your management structure.

Section 2: Appealing a decision

There are three types of decisions that can be appealed:

- An on-programme assessment decision made by your tutor related to signing off criteria.
- A verification decision made by an Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) related to signing off criteria.
- An End Point Assessment decision.

Appealing an on-programme assessment decision

On-programme assessment decisions are made by tutors to sign off the achievement of knowledge and skills defined in the assessment plan. Some programmes also have an additional diploma or certificate qualification as part of their apprenticeship which require assessment decisions. If you don't agree or understand an on-programme assessment decision made by your tutor:

- Ask your tutor to explain the reason for their decision.
- Say why you want to appeal the decision.

They will then decide whether the decision will be changed or not. If you still don't agree with their decision, you can appeal in writing to the Lead IQA within four weeks by emailing apprenticeships@hhft.nhs.uk.

Appeals received will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

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The Lead IQA or an appropriately qualified nominee not involved in the original decision will:

- Fairly review the grounds for your appeal, your evidence of meeting the criteria, and the related feedback and rationale provided by your tutor.
- Uphold, amend or overturn your tutor's decision.
- Give you feedback on the outcome of the appeal and send you a written response within two weeks. If it is not possible to resolve within this timescale, they will advise you in writing of the reason for the delay and the expected date of resolution.

The outcome of the Lead IQA review represents the final stage of HHFT's internal appeals process. If you are not satisfied with this outcome, you can then appeal to the External Quality Assurer (EQA). The process is provided on the awarding body website. Your tutor can guide you how to submit an appeal and will give you honest and constructive advice, including the likelihood of a successful appeal.

Useful to know:

On-Programme assessment *decisions* are different from **formative assessment *feedback*** which reviews readiness for independent End Point Assessment and indicates evidence of learning against criteria.

You can make a complaint about formative assessment feedback using the process in **Section 1** where you feel it is unfair or unconstructive, as poor feedback or advice can negatively impact learning.

Appealing a Verification Decision

Verification decisions are made as part of internal quality assurance sampling by an IQA. They may disagree with an assessment decision made by the tutor and ask them to request the activity is resubmitted to meet specific criteria.

- Your tutor will explain the reason for the decision. If you don't agree If you don't agree or understand the verification decision made by the IQA you can appeal in writing to the Lead IQA who will follow the same steps as above.
- Before you submit an appeal, talk to your tutor about why you think it is not a fair decision, and they will advise you on the likelihood of a successful outcome.
- If you are not satisfied with this outcome, you can then appeal to the Awarding Body External Quality Assurer (**EQA** – for diplomas/certificates) or assessment organisation (**AO** – for Apprenticeship Standards). The process is provided on the relevant awarding body/AO website. Your tutor can guide you how to submit an appeal and give you honest and constructive advice, including the likelihood of a successful appeal.

Appealing an End Point Assessment Decision

Independent AOs are responsible for the assessment and award of apprenticeship qualifications.

- If you disagree with a decision they have made, you can appeal against that decision. The process is provided on the relevant AOs website.
- Your tutor can guide you how to submit an appeal and will give you honest and constructive advice, including the likelihood of a successful appeal.

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Appendix A – Definitions

HHFT Apprenticeship	An apprenticeship is a genuine job, with an accompanying skills development programme. This is an HHFT apprenticeship where the training programme is delivered by the Trust through the Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Team. The team may subcontract part of the programme to be delivered by another provider, for example functional skills classes, Moulage training or level 2 pharmacy coaching.
Apprentice	An employed individual who is completing an apprenticeship under an Apprenticeship Agreement.
Apprenticeship Agreement	This is a legal document and confirms individual employment arrangements between the apprentice and HHFT (alongside their main employment contract) while they are completing their apprenticeship.
Employer	The organisation that employs the apprentice. The employer is usually represented by the apprentice's manager.
Training Provider	The organisation that delivers the apprenticeship programme (i.e. the HHFT Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Team). They may be a subcontractor of the Lead Training Provider, e.g. University Hospital Southampton.
Assessment Organisation	An independent organisation that carries out apprenticeship independent assessments, e.g. Innovate Awarding.
Awarding Body	A regulated organisation which develops, designs and certifies qualifications, e.g. City and Guilds, Open Awards.
Regulating Body	Apprenticeships in England are funded and overseen by the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions, with quality of provision inspected by Ofsted. Apprenticeship providers must comply with the relevant funding rules, apprenticeship standards and quality requirements set by these regulating bodies.

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Appendix B – Useful links

Support and useful sources of further information / advice

Apprenticeship funding rules: 2026 to 2027

Home / Skills England

Subcontractor Policy, available at: Apprenticeships at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Making a complaint to the Department for Education (DfE)

South Hampshire College Group (Functional Skills)

Assessment Organisations and Awarding Bodies

City and Guilds and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM):

- Help for Learners
- Feedback and complaints form

Innovate Awarding:

- Contact

NOCN:

- Contact

Open Awards:

- Contact

Appendix C – Policy process sharing

Where the policy process will be published

The policy guidance will be published on the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust website - Work with Us:

Apprenticeships at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

How the policy process will be promoted

It will be circulated to all members of the Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Team to confirm they have read and understood the policy.

How commitment to the policy process will be gained

Through a range of communication, quality improvement and training activities. This may include Standardisation and Quality Improvement meetings, one-to-ones and annual appraisals, and training for new staff and as refreshers:

- Included within induction
- Best practice is shared at Standardisation Meetings in order to maintain relevance and understanding
- Cases are monitored by the Apprenticeship Quality Team as part of our Quality Improvement Planning.

Line manager support and escalation will be provided in the case of a complaint for all staff and apprentices.

Appendix D – Data monitoring and protection

The Trust is committed to ensuring the security and protection of all personal information that is stored, recorded, processed, shared and accessed and in all activities to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data privacy and confidentiality. The Trust fully recognises the obligations in meeting the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Trust is dedicated to safeguarding personal information under this remit and in ensuring that the data protection regime is robust, effective, fit for purpose and demonstrates an understanding of and appreciation of the current legislation.

Trust Data Security and Protection / Information Governance Team and Cyber Security Team

The Trust's Data Privacy Notice can be accessed at the link below:

https://www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/how-we-use-your-information

The Agreement and Training Plan will be held on the apprentice's personal file and within their Evidence Pack held by the Training Provider. As a training provider, the Trust will also comply with the Record keeping and retention information for training providers.

All complaints and appeals will be logged by the Apprenticeship Team and reviewed to identify recurring themes, risks and opportunities for quality improvement.

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POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy title	Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Delivered Apprenticeships: Complaints and Appeals Policy Process
Policy type (Apprenticeships or Trust)	Apprenticeships
Apprenticeship Sign-off	Signature:  Helen Howe, Associate Director of Apprenticeships and Widening Participation
Date	14/10/2026
Version	v5.1
Review Date	November 2027 (annually)
Summary of changes	Clarification of timescales and inclusion of different scenarios and contacts

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