Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

South Cumbria Skills Exchange (SCSE), operated by Whamos Training and Development CIC, is a community-focused training and education provider based in Millom, Cumbria. We deliver two main areas of work:

- **Commercial training and assessed qualifications** in First Aid, health and safety, food safety, and education and training, delivered through our awarding body partners Qualifications Network (QNUK) and Open Awards.
- **Unregistered Alternative Provision (AP)** for children and young people commissioned by schools and Cumberland Council, delivered through bespoke programmes that meet learners where they are.

We are committed to providing high quality training, education and AP, and to ensuring that equality of opportunity underpins all aspects of our work.

This policy sets out how complaints may be raised about any aspect of our work. The four-stage process below applies to complaints about qualifications, training delivery, assessment and the operation of our business. A separate pathway, set out later in this policy, applies to complaints about Alternative Provision delivery.

2. Scope

It is important that all complaints are raised directly with Whamos Training and Development CIC.

3. Overview — qualifications and training complaints

Our complaints policy is a four-stage process, each process is detailed below, most complaints will be resolved to a satisfactory standard at stage one.

If the complaint is not resolved at stage one then it should be escalated to stage two and if not resolved again it should be escalated to stage three, finally if not resolved at the third stage the final stage should be used.

4. Stage one — with the trainer/staff member

- Complaint is raised directly with the trainer/assessor conducting the course, who will deal with the complaint at the time that it is raised.
- If the complaint is not about a course but about another aspect of our business, then the complaint should be raised with the staff member the customer is in communication with.

5. Stage two — SCSE head office

- Complaint should be referred to Whamos Training and Development CIC head office where there is a named contact who deal with complaints, they can be contacted, in writing by using the following details:

- Elizabeth Amos-Milburn, Whamos Training and Development CIC, South Cumbria Skills Exchange, 01229774591, elizabeth@cumbriaskills.org.uk, https://www.whamostraining.co.uk
- We will aim to resolve all complaints within 10 working days in writing.

6. Stage three — awarding organisation

- Complaint should be referred to Qualifications Network, who will carry out an investigation into the complaint and will contact the complainant with the results of their investigation.
- Qualifications Network can be contacted by phoning 020 3795 0559.
- For Open Awards qualifications, Open Awards can be contacted on 0151 494 2072 or by emailing enquiries@openawards.org.uk.

7. Stage four — regulator (Ofqual)

- Stage four is the final stage of the complaint, if your complaint has not been resolved, you can take your complaint to Ofqual.
- You can make us aware of your complaint by letter, phone or email.

8. Regulator contact

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Earlsdon Park,

53-55 Butts Road,

Coventry

CV1 3BH

Telephone: 0300 303 3346 (Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm) Textphone: 0300 303 3345 Fax: 0300 303 3348 Email: info@ofqual.gov.uk

9. Information to provide regulators

You need to provide regulators with the following information:

- What the complaint is about
- Your full name and candidate number (if you have one)
- The training provider’s name and number
- The name of the awarding organisation or exam board
- The qualification or unit title and code number
- Copies of any relevant supporting documents.

10. Regulator timescales

Regulators promise to:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days of receiving it
- give you a full response within 30 working days.

11. Records and review

Whamos Training and Development CIC will keep a written record of all complaints and compliments made about our business, this will be made available to any inspectors or other organisations that conduct Quality Assurance based audits.

Our primary aim is to provide high quality customer focused training and qualifications; therefore, we aim to have very few complaints and certainly aim to resolve any complaints within our company.

12. Complaints about Alternative Provision delivery

The four-stage process above is designed for complaints about qualifications and assessment. Where a learner, parent or carer wishes to complain about any other aspect of the Alternative Provision SCSE delivers – including teaching quality, behaviour management, the learning environment, or any safeguarding or welfare concern – the following pathway applies.

Stage A — Speaking to a member of staff

We hope that most concerns can be resolved by an informal conversation with the learner's mentor or with any member of SCSE staff. We will listen, acknowledge the concern, and where appropriate take action straight away. We will tell the person who raised the concern what action has been taken or what will happen next.

Stage B — Raising the matter in writing with the Directors

If a concern is not resolved informally, or if the person raising it prefers to put the matter in writing from the outset, they may write to either Director:

- Elizabeth Amos-Milburn – elizabeth@cumbriaskills.org.uk
- Alexandra Gager-Liebhart – lexie@cumbriaskills.org.uk

The Director will acknowledge the complaint within two working days and aim to provide a written response within ten working days. Where the complaint is complex or requires investigation, we will write within that time to explain the timescale and keep the person regularly updated.

Stage C — Escalation to the commissioning school

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the SCSE response, or where the complaint relates to the placement itself, they may escalate to the commissioning school. SCSE will share the complaint and the SCSE response with the commissioning school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and headteacher with the complainant's consent.

Stage D — Escalation to the local authority

If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may contact Cumberland Council's Alternative Provision team:

- Cumberland Council Alternative Provision Team – via the council switchboard on 0300 373 3730.
- For learners commissioned by another local authority, that authority's AP commissioning team should be contacted.

13. Special handling — safeguarding and learner welfare

Where a complaint relates to safeguarding or learner welfare, SCSE will notify the commissioning school's Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, regardless of the stage at which the complaint is being handled, and will coordinate the response jointly. If the complaint concerns the conduct of a member of SCSE staff towards a learner, the matter is referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the same day in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

14. Confidentiality and learner involvement

Where a learner raises a complaint, we will take it seriously regardless of its scale. We will support the learner to feel heard and explain in age-appropriate language what will happen next. Information about a learner's complaint is shared only with those who need to know to resolve it.

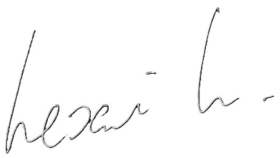
15. Recording and learning

All complaints raised through this pathway are logged with the date received, summary, action taken, outcome and date closed. The directors review the complaints log quarterly to identify any themes or lessons to be embedded in practice.

Whamos Training and Development CIC will keep a written record of all complaints made about our provision and will share anonymised summaries with commissioning schools and the local authority on request.

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved on behalf of the Directors:

Elizabeth Amos-Milburn *Co-Director*	**Alexandra Gager-Liebhart** *Co-Director*
	

Date of approval: 18th May 2026

Next review: 18th May 2027

Schedule 1 — Record of Changes

Version	Date	Nature of Change
001	18th May 2026	Initial published version included in the Combined Policies and Procedures 2026 edition.