

# Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure 2026-27

NextStep Training Ltd (NST)

## Document control

This is Version 6.0 of the policy for 2026-27. It replaces Version 5.2 (February 2025). The main changes are updated contact details, external escalation through the Department for Education (which took over the work of the Education and Skills Funding Agency in April 2025), and removal of the appeals procedure, which is now set out only in NST's Learner Appeals Policy and Procedure.

| Version | Date            | Author                                | Authorised by                    | Next review        |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 6.0     | 21 October 2026 | Sharron Williams<br>(Quality Manager) | Ahmed Khan, Managing<br>Director | 21 October<br>2027 |
| 5.2     | February 2025   | —                                     | Ahmed Khan, Managing<br>Director | February 2026      |

**Next review date:** 21/10/2027

**Approval:** This policy has been reviewed and approved by:

**Name:** AHMED KHAN

**Title:** Managing Director

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 21/10/2026

## 1. Our aim

NST is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways we improve is by listening and responding to the views of apprentices, employers and other clients, responding positively to complaints, and putting mistakes right.

We aim to make sure that:

- raising a concern or making a complaint is as easy as possible, in person, by phone, by email or in writing
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction that calls for a prompt response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, where appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way, for example with an explanation, an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on the action taken
- nobody is treated less favourably for making a complaint
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review this policy every year

## 2. Informal resolution

Many concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. We aim to resolve informal concerns quickly, keep matters low-key and, where helpful, arrange a conversation between the complainant and the person concerned.

An informal approach can start by speaking to your tutor or assessor, your internal quality assurer or the Quality Manager. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, use the formal procedure in Section 4.

## 3. What this policy covers

A complaint may be about unsatisfactory service, unfair or discriminatory actions or decisions, or the behaviour of anyone acting on behalf of NST. Examples include information given about programmes or qualifications, recruitment and selection, support for apprentices, how long we take to respond, or unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Some matters follow other procedures:

| Matter                                                                       | Procedure                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Appeals against an assessment decision                                       | Learner Appeals Policy and Procedure                                                                                |
| Safeguarding concerns, including abuse, sexual harassment and radicalisation | Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy: tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Zak Vesamia, the same day |
| Concerns about how NST uses personal data                                    | Data Protection Policy (data protection complaints procedure)                                                       |
| Concerns raised by NST staff about their own employment                      | Staff grievance procedure                                                                                           |
| Concerns about wrongdoing at NST                                             | Whistleblowing procedure in the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy                                   |

## 4. Formal complaints procedure

### Step 1: Make your complaint

Contact the Quality Manager, Sharron Williams, by phone on 020 7247 5497 or 020 3352 7235, by email to [info@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk](mailto:info@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk) (marked "Complaint"), or by post to Unit A2, Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3DQ. The Quality Manager will record the complaint and may ask you to complete the Complaints Record Form (Appendix 1). We can help you complete it, or record a complaint made by phone or in person, if you need support.

### Step 2: Acknowledgement and investigation

Within 5 working days of receiving your written complaint, the Quality Manager will identify the right person to deal with it, such as an internal quality assurer, a programme manager, a manager from your employer or an independent person, review the information and write to you with recommendations for resolving it. If the matter needs longer to investigate, we will tell you why and when to expect a full reply.

### Step 3: Review by the Managing Director

If you are unhappy with the action taken, write within 10 working days explaining your concern. The Quality Manager will make a full report to the Managing Director, Ahmed Khan, who will review the complaint and either advise further action or confirm the original decision, and write to you. If the complaint is about the Quality Manager, it goes straight to the Managing Director, who may involve an independent person or refer the matter to the relevant awarding organisation.

### Step 4: Review by the Board

If you are still dissatisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed by the Chair of the Board of Governors, Leanne Edwards, who may involve another governor or an independent person. If the next Board meeting is more than 3 months from the date of your original complaint, a special meeting will be arranged. The review takes account of all previous action. The Board's decision is the final stage of NST's internal procedure. If the complaint is about the Managing Director, it goes directly to the Chair.

## 5. If you remain dissatisfied

Once NST's internal procedure is complete, you can take your complaint to:

- **The Department for Education**, for complaints about NST's apprenticeship provision or how we handled your complaint: through the apprenticeship service help pages ([help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk](https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk)) or the National Apprenticeship Helpdesk on 08000 150 600
- **The awarding organisation** for your qualification (for example CMI, NCFE, ILM or OCR), for matters about the qualification
- **The end-point assessment organisation**, for matters about your end-point assessment
- **Ofsted**, for concerns about the quality or safety of NST's provision
- **The Information Commissioner's Office**, for data protection complaints, after using NST's data protection complaints procedure

Some complaints are the responsibility of another organisation, such as an employer, awarding organisation or end-point assessment organisation. Where that is the case, we will explain this and, with your agreement, refer it to them.

## **6. Recording and monitoring**

The Quality Manager keeps a complaints log recording every complaint, the action taken and the outcome. Records are kept securely in line with the Data Protection Policy and shared with external quality assurers as part of routine monitoring. The Managing Director reports complaints, themes and resulting improvements to the Board of Governors at every meeting, and the Board considers them when reviewing policies and procedures.

## **7. Contact**

For questions about this policy, contact the Quality Manager, Sharron Williams, on 020 7247 5497 or at [info@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk](mailto:info@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk).

## Appendix 1: Complaints Record Form

| Field                                                           | Details |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Complainant name                                                |         |
| Apprentice, employer or other (please state)                    |         |
| Address                                                         |         |
| Telephone                                                       |         |
| Email                                                           |         |
| Nature of complaint (what happened, when, and who was involved) |         |
| What would you like to happen?                                  |         |
| Signature                                                       |         |
| Date                                                            |         |

### For NST use

| Field                            | Details |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Date received                    |         |
| Received by (name and signature) |         |
| Date acknowledged                |         |
| Investigated by                  |         |

## Appendix 2: Complaints Follow-up Form

| Field                                                       | Details |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| NST actions taken                                           |         |
| Outcome communicated to complainant (date)                  |         |
| Escalated to Managing Director or Board? (date and outcome) |         |
| Lessons learned and improvements made                       |         |
| Date complaint closed                                       |         |
| Name, role and signature                                    |         |

