



CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2025-2026

Reviewed: April 2025
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Approved by the Senior Leadership Team



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1. Introduction

Bespoke Mentoring and Training Services Limited ("the Organisation") is an alternative provision committed to supporting learners aged 6-25 with special educational needs (SEN) and social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. We value feedback from parents/carers, learners, and schools to improve our services and maintain a supportive, inclusive environment. This Concerns and Complaints Policy outlines a clear, accessible process for raising concerns or complaints, ensuring they are handled promptly, fairly, and with sensitivity to the needs of our community.

This policy complies with the Education Act 2002, the Equality Act 2010, and Department for Education (DfE) guidance on complaints procedures. It applies to parents/carers, learners, and schools referring learners to our provision, covering concerns or complaints about our services, staff, or operations.

2. Aims

- To provide an accessible, transparent process for parents/carers, learners, and schools to raise concerns or complaints.
- To resolve issues promptly, fairly, and informally where possible, with a focus on SEN/SEMH needs.

- To ensure complaints are handled sensitively, maintaining trust and positive relationships.
- To promote a culture of openness, encouraging feedback to improve our provision.
- To comply with legal and statutory obligations, including equality and safeguarding requirements.

3. Scope

This policy covers:

- Concerns or complaints about the Organisation's services, including teaching, mentoring, behaviour management, or SEN/SEMH support.
- Issues raised by parents/carers, learners (with SEN-accessible support), or referring schools.
- Complaints about staff conduct, policies, or operational decisions.
- Incidents on Organisation premises, during off-site activities, or online where they relate to our provision.

This policy does not cover:

- Safeguarding concerns, which are handled under the Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff grievances, which follow the Grievance Policy.
- Exclusions, which have a separate appeals process per DfE guidance.

4. Definitions

- **Concern:** An issue raised informally, seeking resolution without formal procedures.
- **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction requiring investigation and a structured response.
- **Complainant:** The parent/carer, learner, or school representative raising the concern or complaint.

5. Principles

- **Accessibility:** Processes are SEN/SEMH-friendly, with support for learners (e.g., simplified forms, verbal reporting).
- **Fairness:** Complaints are handled impartially, with no discrimination based on protected characteristics (e.g., disability, race).
- **Confidentiality:** Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis, per the Data Protection Policy.
- **Timeliness:** Issues are addressed promptly to minimise disruption and maintain trust.
- **Resolution-Focused:** Informal resolution is prioritised, with formal processes for serious or unresolved issues.

- **Safeguarding:** Concerns indicating welfare risks are escalated per the Safeguarding Policy.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Leadership Team:** Oversees policy implementation, ensures fair handling of complaints, and reviews outcomes.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Addresses concerns with safeguarding implications, per the Safeguarding Policy.
- **Complaints Coordinator:** A named staff member contact laura.davis@bespokementoring.org manages the complaints process, supports complainants, and maintains records.
- **SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator):** Ensures SEN/SEMH needs are considered in complaint handling (e.g., accessible communication).
- **Staff:** Respond to concerns professionally, escalate complaints to the Coordinator, and cooperate with investigations.
- **Parents/Carers:** Raise concerns promptly, provide relevant details, and engage in resolution processes.
- **Learners:** Are supported to express concerns, with SEN/SEMH-appropriate methods (e.g., mentor assistance).
- **Referring Schools:** Communicate concerns clearly, providing context about referred learners.

7. Raising a Concern (Informal Stage)

Most issues can be resolved informally by discussing them with the relevant staff member. The process is:

1. **Contact:**
 - a. **Parents/Carers:** Contact the learner's mentor or class teacher via email, or in person.
 - b. **Learners:** Speak to a trusted staff member (e.g., mentor) or use accessible reporting methods (e.g., suggestion boxes, visual forms). Support is provided for SEN/SEMH needs.
 - c. **Schools:** Contact the learner's mentor or the Complaints Coordinator.
2. **Discussion:** The staff member listens, clarifies the concern, and proposes a resolution within 5 working days.
3. **Outcome:**
 - a. If resolved, the staff member logs the concern and informs the complainant.
 - b. If unresolved, the complainant is guided to the formal complaints process.

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible, ideally within 10 working days of the issue.

8. Making a Formal Complaint

If a concern is not resolved informally or is serious, a formal complaint can be made:

1. **Submission:**
 - a. Submit the complaint in writing email:
laura.davis@bespokementoring.org
 - b. Include: complainant's name, contact details, details of the issue, steps already taken, and desired outcome.
 - c. Learners can receive support from mentors or the SENCO to articulate complaints (e.g., verbal recording, visual aids).
2. **Acknowledgement:** The Complaints Coordinator acknowledges receipt within 3 working days, outlining the process and expected timeline.
3. **Investigation:**
 - a. The Coordinator or a designated senior staff member investigates within 10 working days, involving:
 - i. Interviews with the complainant, staff, and witnesses, using SEN-accessible methods.
 - ii. Review of relevant records (e.g., behaviour logs, EHCPs).
 - iii. Consideration of SEN/SEMH needs or contextual factors.
 - b. If safeguarding issues arise, the DSL is notified immediately.
4. **Outcome:**
 - a. A written response is provided within 15 working days, detailing findings, actions taken, and resolution steps.
 - b. For learners, outcomes are communicated in SEN-appropriate formats (e.g., simplified letters, verbal explanations).
 - c. If unresolved, the complainant is informed of the escalation process.

9. Escalation to Senior Leadership

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the formal outcome:

1. **Request Review:**
 - a. Submit a written request to the Director email:
chris.powell@bespokementoring.org within 10 working days, explaining why the outcome is unsatisfactory.
 - b. Learners can receive support to draft requests.
2. **Review:**
 - a. The Director (or a delegated senior leader not previously involved) reviews the complaint, investigation, and outcome within 10 working days.
 - b. Additional interviews or evidence may be sought, with SEN/SEMH accommodations.
3. **Outcome:**
 - a. A written response is provided within 15 working days, confirming or revising the original decision, with reasons and any further actions.
 - b. This decision is final within the Organisation's process.

10. External Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can escalate to external bodies:

- **Ofsted:** For concerns about the overall operation of the provision.
 - Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted
 - Phone: 0300 123 1231

- **Local Authority:** For complaints involving SEN provision or safeguarding.
 - Contact details provided by the Complaints Coordinator.
- **Department for Education:** For unresolved complaints about the Organisation's compliance.
 - Website: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school
- Complainants are informed of these options in the final response, with support for learners with SEN/SEMH to understand next steps.

11. Support for Complainants

- **Learners:**
 - SENCO and mentors provide assistance to express concerns (e.g., visual aids, verbal support).
 - Emotional support is offered for SEMH learners during the process (e.g., counselling, safe spaces).
- **Parents/Carers:** Receive clear, accessible guidance on the process, with translations or simplified formats if needed.
- **Schools:** Supported by the Complaints Coordinator to provide relevant learner context.
- **Accessibility:** All communications are tailored to meet equality requirements, per the Equality Act 2010.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Complaints are handled confidentially, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Records are stored securely, compliant with the Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR.
- SEN/SEMH data (e.g., EHCPs) is protected with heightened security measures.
- Anonymous complaints may be investigated at the Organisation's discretion, but feedback may be limited.

13. Recording and Monitoring

- All concerns and complaints are logged securely, detailing the issue, actions, and outcomes.
- The Complaints Coordinator reviews logs termly to identify trends (e.g., recurring issues, SEN/SEMH-related concerns).
- Findings inform staff training, policy updates, and service improvements, reported to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Data is anonymized for reporting purposes, per the Data Protection Policy.

14. Training

- **Staff:** Annual training on handling concerns/complaints, with focus on SEN/SEMH sensitivity, equality, and safeguarding. New staff complete induction training.

- **Learners:** Workshops on raising concerns, tailored to SEN/SEMH needs (e.g., visual guides, role-plays).
- **Parents/Carers:** Guidance sessions on the complaints process, with accessible resources.

15. Collaboration with Stakeholders

We work with:

- **Parents/Carers:** To resolve issues collaboratively, ensuring SEN/SEMH needs are addressed.
- **Learners:** Through learner councils to improve feedback processes.
- **Referring Schools:** To align on learner support and complaint resolution.
- **External Agencies:** Such as local authorities or SEN advocates for complex cases.

16. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed every two years or following significant changes (e.g., new legislation, complaint trends).
- The Complaints Coordinator gathers feedback from complainants, staff, and schools, using SEN-accessible methods (e.g., simplified surveys).
- Termly complaint reports are shared with the Senior Leadership Team to drive improvements.

17. Consequences of Non-Compliance

- Staff failing to follow this policy face disciplinary action, per the Staff Attendance and Behaviour Policy.
- Frivolous or vexatious complaints may be declined, with complainants informed of the decision and reasons.
- Non-compliance undermines trust and the Organisation's commitment to inclusion.

18. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- **Education Act 2002:** Requirement for a complaints procedure.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Non-discrimination and reasonable adjustments for SEN/SEMH.
- **Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR:** Secure handling of complaint data.
- **DfE Guidance:** "Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures" (2019), "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2024).
- **Public Sector Equality Duty:** Promoting equality and inclusion.

19. Contact

For concerns, complaints, or support:

SEN & Youth Pathways Manager

Email: laura.davis@bespokementoring.co.uk

Address: Bespoke Mentoring and Training Services, Regents Walk, Newerne Street, Lydney, Gloucester, GL15 5RF.

For safeguarding concerns, contact:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Email: jacqui.reddan@bespokementoring.co.uk

External escalation options:

- **Ofsted:** www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted, 0300 123 1231
- **Department for Education:** www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

20. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Learning Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Hate Crime Policy
- SEN Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Approval

The Senior Leadership T
immediately



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