



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
Scotland

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure all complaints are resolved quickly and efficiently. The information gained from complaints should be used to inform and improve practice within both the company and the wider network.

Scope

This procedure applies to all aspects of the service provided by Investors in People Scotland. Where appropriate, complaints will be forwarded to Investors in People UK or the relevant regional quality centre for investigation and response.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive has the ultimate responsibility for this procedure. The Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive has operational responsibility for day-to-day activities related to this procedure.

How are complaints received?

Complaints may be made through the Investors in People Scotland web site, via e-mail, letters, telephone calls or in meetings with representatives of Investors in People Scotland. All written complaints should be handled by the PA to the Chief Executive in the first instance. Complaints may also be made on Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires. These are subject to a different process which is described later in this document.

Complaints Procedure

It is company policy that all complaints are treated seriously. We must act courteously and professionally at all times, treating complainants with empathy, using the complaint as an opportunity to learn. Confidentiality is also a major consideration, given the highly sensitive nature of some allegations against organisations or individuals.

We cannot instigate a formal complaint investigation unless the complainant is prepared to present their complaint in writing. This is common practice in many organisations and ensures we only deal with bona-fide complaints. To investigate a complaint, we need the minimum information, which can be provided either by e-mail or letter:

- The name of the complainant
- The complainant's address

- Details of the complaint
- Where appropriate, written permission from the complainant to discuss the details of their complaint with the organisation and/or individuals concerned (this does not include disclosing their identity, although complainants need to be aware that it might be easy for the organisation to identify them from their individual complaint)

Once a complaint has been received in writing, the PA to the Chief Executive will record the complaint on the company Service Improvement Database and will either investigate the complaint or forward details of the complaint to the most relevant person. This person might be an Assessor's Practitioner Developer, the Quality Developer, a member of the Management Team or the Chief Executive. At the discretion of Investors in People Scotland, a Service Improvement record may also be raised on the database without a formal complaint being received or where a lapse in process is identified internally.

The PA to the Chief Executive will ensure that receipt of the complaint is confirmed. In most cases this will be a written acknowledgement using e-mail or letter sent within two working days of receipt of the complaint.

Where the complaint is clearly not related to the content of the Standard

Where a complaint falls under this category, the PA to the Chief Executive will respond accordingly within ten working days of the complaint being received. Where possible, the reply should explain why the complaint cannot be formally investigated by Investors in People Scotland. Examples of where there is no obvious link between the complaint and the content of the Standard could include:

- Customer Service
- Pay
- Some employment practices
- Application of internal processes such as exit interviews

In these situations we should try and add value by signposting individuals to the correct source of advice or guidance such as other Government funded agencies, Citizens Advice Bureau, Trade Unions, Professional Bodies or the legal profession.

Where the complaint is related to the quality of service provided by Investors in People Scotland, whether directly or indirectly through the delivery network, each situation will be carefully examined and will be dealt with according to its individual circumstances. A substantive, if not full, response will be made within ten working days of the complaint being received.

Complaint against an organisation that may relate to the content of the Standard

Where a complaint appears to have some connection to the Standard or the actions of a client organisation might bring the credibility of the Standard into disrepute, we must take prompt and decisive action to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible. Action should be taken regardless of whether the complainant has given their personal details or has chosen to remain anonymous.

Once the complaint has been received in writing, the investigating member of staff will check the following information using the company's Assessment and Recognition database:

- Whether the organisation in question is recognised as an Investor in People
- The recognition or last review date, which may have a bearing upon which version of the Standard the organisation has been assessed against.
- If the organisation is working towards recognition as an Investor in People, the delivery partner (e.g. local enterprise company) may be informed of the complaint. The complainant will be informed that Investors in People Scotland cannot take any direct action against a 'non-recognised organisation' and, where appropriate, that their complaint has been passed to a local delivery partner to discuss with the organisation. The purpose of this event is to ensure that the organisation uses this kind of feedback in a positive way to continuously improve its Investors in People related practices. The delivery partner must ensure they do not divulge the complainant's identity.
- If the organisation is recognised as an Investor in People, the person handling the complaint will conduct a thorough and open minded investigation of the issue and will ensure a substantive, if not full, response is made in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being received. Where it is not possible to meet this deadline (e.g. due to non availability of people key to the investigation) the complainant will be contacted and informed of the expected response date. Care must be taken not to disclose any commercial, sensitive or confidential information to the complainant
- Where the complainant is embarking upon legal action or considering taking the organisation to a formal tribunal, the investigation should not begin until the outcomes of legal action or tribunal are known.
- Where a complaint has been forwarded to Investors in People Scotland by Investors in People UK, all documentation related to the complaint should be copied to the IIP UK Quality Projects Manager.
- When the complaint relates to actions likely to bring the Standard into disrepute, the complaint shall be investigated in accordance with the guidance set out in latest version of the Practitioner Handbook. All of the available evidence should be presented to a Recognition Panel for discussion. It is strongly recommended that the Recognition Panel formally convene with expert moderation to discuss cases of this type.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the way the complaint has been investigated, the matter shall be escalated to the Chief Executive for review. Where the matter was handled by the Chief Executive, the matter may be referred to the Chairman of Investors in People Scotland for review.

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires are completed by client organisations following an assessment activity. Questionnaire results are entered on the company's database by the Client or internally by an Administrator. Returned questionnaires that indicate any kind of dissatisfaction with the assessment process are referred by the Administrator to a Practitioner Developer or Quality Developer for investigation.

Reporting of complaints

Using the Service Improvement Database report the management team review a monthly summary of complaints and customer satisfaction questionnaire feedback for understanding of service issues, to communicate preventative and corrective action and to verify that complaint deadlines have been met.

Summaries of client feedback are also reviewed by the Board of Directors at quarterly Board meetings.

Action taken to improve business practice is recorded on an Improvement Action Plan which is reviewed at the annual ISO Management Review meeting.

Storing information relating to the complaint

The PA to the Chief Executive shall be responsible for ensuring all documentation relating to individual complaints is stored for a minimum period of three years. All letters, e-mails and notes from substantial phone calls are should be referenced against the relevant database number and stored within our Edinburgh office.

Costs relating to investigating complaints

Occasionally, it is necessary to visit an organisation or even carry out interviews, to determine whether a complaint is genuine. If there is any possibility of costs being incurred during the course of an investigation (e.g. to pay an Assessor), the person requesting the visit must ensure all parties agree and understand who will fund the investigation.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 provides a general right of access to information held by a public body, including Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as Investors in People UK. There are certain exemptions to this right. Complaints will come within these exemptions and therefore will not be available under this general right of access.

The Act states that there are absolute exemptions for personal information (section 38) and information provided in confidence (section 36). These exemptions cover the information that will form the record of the complaint and as such they will not be released.

When a complaint is made, it may contain requests for information. The complainant, under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, has a general right of access to this information. Unless the information is considered exempt, it will be released to the complainant in accordance with the Act.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of information relating to individuals including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information. Complaint records will hold personal information and as such the data subject will have a right to see the information held about them. This right also enables the subject to request the rectification of an incorrect data on the record. A fee of £10 may be charged for a request under the Data Protection Act (referred to as a subject access request).