

POLICY

OCTOBER 2024

COMPLAINT POLICY



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COMPLAINT POLICY

INTRODUCTION TO THIS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

This Complaints Policy applies to the provision of services by Dental Nurse Academy to the stakeholders defined below.

Complaints may relate to any of our activities and may include (but not be limited to):

- The quality of customer service you have received from Dental Nurse Academy;
- The behaviour and/or professional competence of our employees agents or subcontractors;
- Delays, defects or other problems associated with the provision of services by Dental Nurse Academy;
- Delays, defects, poor workmanship or other problems associated with the provision of services by Dental Nurse Academy;

The following are not considered to be Complaints and should therefore be directed to the appropriate person department:

- General questions about our services;
- Matters concerning contractual or other legal disputes;
- Formal requests for the disclosure of information, for example, under the Data Protection Act;

PURPOSE

Dental Nurse Academy welcomes and encourages feedback of all kinds from our customers. If you have a Complaint about our services, our customer service, or about our employees, agents or subcontractors, not only do we want to resolve it to your satisfaction but we also want to learn from it in order to improve our business and customer experience in the future.

It is our policy to resolve Complaints quickly and fairly, where possible without recourse to formal investigations or external bodies. In particular, the aims of this Complaints Policy are:

1. To provide a clear and fair procedure for any customers who wish to make a Complaint about Dental Nurse Academy our services, our customer service, or about our employees agents or subcontractors;
2. To ensure that everyone working for or with Dental Nurse Academy knows how to handle Complaints made by our customers;
3. To ensure that all Complaints are handled equally and in a fair and timely fashion;
4. To ensure that important information is gathered from Complaints and used in the future to avoid such a situation arising again.

STAKEHOLDERS

This policy applies to Customers of the DNA. This includes:

1. Learners
 - a. Apprenticeship students
 - b. National Diploma students
2. Third Parties
 - a. Employers (Dental Practices) of our learners

DEFINITIONS

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

- (i) **DNA** means the Dental Nurse Academy.
- (ii) **Employers** means the employer (Dental Practice) of an Apprentice or National Diploma student who is registered with the Dental Nurse Academy.
- (iii) **Learners** means Apprentices and National Diploma students.
- (iv) **Staff** means The Board, Senior Managers, Employees, Self Employed, Agency Staff and Volunteers acting on behalf of the Dental Nurse Academy.
- (v) **Third Parties** means Employers, Sub-Contractors to the DNA and Suppliers to the DNA

DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS POLICY

- (vi) **Appeal** means your request to escalate a Complaint from Level One to Level Two if you are not satisfied with the outcome at Level One;
- (vii) **Appeal Handler** means an employee of Dental Nurse Academy working at Director level who will handle Level Two Complaints;
- (viii) **Business Day** means, any day (other than Saturday or Sunday) on which ordinary banks are open for their full range of normal business in head office;
- (ix) **Complaint** means a complaint about services sold by Dental Nurse Academy, about our customer service, or about our employees, agents or subcontractors;
- (x) **Complaints Form** means our standard complaints form, available online at www.dentalnurseacademy.com/complaints
- (xi) **Complaint Handler** means an employee of Dental Nurse Academy working at manager level who will handle Level One Complaints;
- (xii) **Complaints Policy** means this document;
- (xiii) **Complaints Procedure** means the internal complaints handling procedure of Dental Nurse Academy which is followed when handling a Complaint;
- (xiv) **Complaint Reference** means Complaint Case Number or Concern Case Number. This is a unique code assigned to your Complaint that will be used to track your Complaint;
- (xv) **Customer** means anyone who joins the DNA as a learner or their employer;
- (xvi) **External Resolution** means the referral of your Complaint to an external body or organisation for resolution if you are not satisfied with the outcome at Level Two;
- (xvii) **Level One** means the first stage in our complaints handling procedure under which your Complaint will be handled by a Complaint Handler; and

(xviii) **Level Two** means the second stage in our complaints handling procedure under which you may appeal the outcome of a Level One Complaint. Your Complaint will be handled by an Appeal Handler.

RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

Complaints can be made in respect of or outside of DNA policies. As such all DNA policies and arrangements have a bearing on the complaints procedure.

Related Policies:

- POL-I-1 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy
- POL-I-2 Health and Safety Policy
- POL-I-3 Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Policy
- POL-I-5 Professional Development Policy
- POL-I-6 Privacy Policy
- POL-I-8 Quality Assurance and Management Policy
- POL-I-9 Whistle Blower Policy
- POL-I-10 Harassment and Bullying Policy

The DNA's policies will be reviewed regularly (on an annual basis) and any identified elements which breach or risk deviation from this policy shall be removed.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There is no legal framework associated with our Complaint Policy, although we aim to adhere to the GDC's guidance and best practice for the handling of complaints.

OUR COMMITMENT

All feedback is considered important to the Dental Nurse Academy. We therefore commit to make it simple and straightforward to raise a concern or complain, if you need to.

The DNA will follow the complaints procedure described in this policy, which includes keeping complainants informed as to our response and if appropriate action taken. We will try to answer all aspects of the complaint.

It is our policy to resolve Complaints quickly and fairly, where possible without recourse to formal investigations or external bodies.

PROMOTION AND COMMITMENT

PROMOTING THIS POLICY

All stakeholders (defined above) are required to engage with this policy and the procedures described.

This policy is promoted via the Staff Handbook, the Student Handbook and is readily available on the DNA website at www.dentalnurseacademy.com.

GAINING COMMITMENT TO THIS POLICY

Confirmation of engagement is required by all stakeholders. Our contracts and agreements require agreement to this Policy's acceptance:

- a. Employee Contract (employees)
- b. Employer Agreement (employers i.e. dental practices)
- c. Apprenticeship Commitment Statement (Apprenticeship learners)
- d. Student terms and conditions (National Diploma learners)
- e. Sub Contracting Agreement (suppliers)

Learners and employers are made aware of the Policy on joining and have to commit to accepting the policy as a condition of joining.

All members of staff are required to attest to their having read, understood and commit to this policy.

1. Upon joining the Dental Nurse Academy, new staff members complete policies and procedures training as part of their induction. Attestation is completed via the web form
2. Each year on an annual basis, all staff members must renew their attestation via the web form.

Web form for staff attestation: www.dentalnurseacademy.com/staff-attestation-form
(staff only)

TRAINING

The Dental Nurse Academy trains staff in how to handle complaints, with additional training provided for Complaint Handlers, who are members of the head office team.

INITIAL TRAINING

Training on this policy is included as part of the induction process when new starters join the Dental Nurse Academy.

The DNA requires all staff to complete DSE training online as provided by the Health and Safety Executive.

REFRESHER TRAINING

Training regarding this policy is repeated annually.

Training is provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements.

MONITORING

The complaints log is reviewed by the board on a regular basis to ensure patterns are identified, individual complaints are appropriately handled, and that action is taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

MANAGING CONCERNS (COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE)

RAISING CONCERNS (MAKING A COMPLAINT)

To raise a concern, contact the Senior Lead in the first instance. If that person is not available, please contact the Deputy Senior Lead. In the event of neither being available please escalate to the point of escalation. Full contact details are described below for each of these individuals.

All concerns should be raised formally by email to raisingconcerns@dentalnurseacademy.com

All Complaints, whether they concern our services, our customer service, or our employees, agents or subcontractors, should be made in one of the following ways:

- In writing, addressed to Course Director, Dental Nurse Academy, 47 Church End, Biddenham, Bedfordshire MK40 4AS
- By email, addressed to raisingconcerns@dentalnurseacademy.com
- Using our Complaints Form, following the instructions included with the form, found online at www.dentalnurseacademy.com/complaints
- By contacting us by telephone on 020 4591 2333

When making a Complaint, you will be required to provide the following information in as much detail as is reasonably possible:

- Your name, address, telephone number and email address (We will contact you using your preferred contact method as your Complaint is handled); if you are a customer, please quote the DNA number in question
- If you are making a Complaint on behalf of someone else, that person's name and contact details as well as your own;
- If you are making a Complaint about a particular person or event (ie name or date of event);
- If you are making a Complaint about a particular employee, agent or subcontractor of ours, the name and, where appropriate, position of that person;
- Further details of your Complaint including, as appropriate, all times, dates, events, and people involved;
- Details of any documents or other evidence you wish to rely on in support of your Complaint;
- Details of what you would like Dental Nurse Academy to do to resolve your Complaint and to put things right. (Please note that whilst we will make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests, we are not bound to take any action beyond that which we may be contractually or otherwise legally obliged to take.)

Dental Nurse Academy operates a two-stage complaints handling procedure. Following our Complaints Procedure, our aim is to always resolve Complaints to your satisfaction at Level One without further recourse to Level Two. If you are not satisfied at the end of Level One, you may escalate your Complaint to Level Two. If you are still not satisfied at the end of Level Two, Complaints may progress to External Resolution as detailed below.

LEVEL ONE

- Upon receipt of your Complaint, the Senior Lead for Complaints (described below) will log the Complaint on our complaints system and will acknowledge receipt of it in writing within 14 days giving you a Complaint Reference.
- When we acknowledge receipt of your Complaint we will also provide details of your Complaint Handler. This may be the person to whom your original Complaint was directed (as above) or your Complaint may be assigned to another appropriate member of our team.
- If your Complaint relates to a specific employee, agent or subcontractor, that person will be informed of your Complaint and given a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond. Any communication between you and the employee, agent or subcontractor in question should take place only via the Complaint Handler and we respectfully ask that you do not contact the employee, agent or subcontractor in question directly concerning the Complaint while we are working to resolve it.
- If we require any further information or evidence from you, the Complaint Handler will contact you as quickly as is reasonably possible to ask for it. We ask that you use reasonable efforts to supply any such information or evidence quickly in order to avoid delaying the complaints handling process. If you are for any reason unable to provide such information or evidence we will use all reasonable efforts to proceed without it, however please be aware that we will not ask for further information or evidence unless we consider it important to the successful resolution of your Complaint.
- We aim to resolve Level One Complaints within 14 days, however in some cases, particularly if your Complaint is of a complex nature, this may not be possible. If this is not possible for any reason you will be informed of the delay, the likely length of the delay and the reasons for it.
- At the conclusion of the Level One complaints procedure, regardless of the outcome, we will provide you with full details of our investigation, our conclusions from that investigation, and any action taken as a result. You will also be reminded of your right to appeal our decision and escalate the complaint to Level Two in the form of an Appeal.

LEVEL TWO

- If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your complaint at Level One, you may appeal the decision within 14 days and have the complaint escalated to Level Two. Appeals are handled by Director level members of our team.
- Appeals, quoting your original Complaint Reference, should be directed to your original Complaint Handler who will forward the request to an appropriate Appeal Handler. Receipt of Appeals will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days. When we acknowledge receipt of your Appeal we will also provide details of your Appeal Handler.
- If your Complaint relates to a specific employee, agent or subcontractor, that person will be informed of your Appeal and given a further opportunity to respond. Any communication

between you and the employee, agent or subcontractor in question should take place only via the Appeal Handler and we respectfully ask that you do not contact the employee, agent or subcontractor in question directly concerning the Complaint while we are working to resolve it.

- If we require any further information or evidence from you, the Appeal Handler will contact you as quickly as is reasonably possible to ask for it. We ask that you use reasonable efforts to supply any such information or evidence to us quickly in order to avoid delaying the complaints handling process. If you are for any reason unable to provide such information or evidence we will use all reasonable efforts to proceed without it, however please be aware that we will not ask for further information or evidence unless we consider it important to the successful resolution of your Complaint.
- We aim to resolve Level Two Complaints within 7 days, however in some cases, particularly if your Complaint is of a complex nature, this may not be possible. If this is not possible for any reason you will be informed of the delay, the likely length of the delay and the reasons for it.
- At the conclusion of the Level Two procedure, regardless of the outcome, we will provide you with full details of our investigation, our conclusions from that investigation, and any action taken as a result. Our decision at this stage is final, subject to your right to seek External Resolution of your Complaint.
- As we are authorised training providers for the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses (NEBDN) you, as our customer, have the right to seek External Resolution of your Complaint from that organisation if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Level Two Complaint.

EXTERNAL RESOLUTION

- If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your Complaint at Level Two you may seek External Resolution of your Complaint from NEBDN. For details of complaint and conflict resolution mechanisms available from them, please contact them by email at customersupport@nedbn.org or via their website at www.nedbdn.org.
- Concerns are recorded in the DNA's Policy Concerns Log, which is stored securely on our HR server. Access is restricted to this folder so that only relevant persons can access the log. It is the responsibility of the Senior Lead to record all concerns and action taken.
- All log files are kept in accordance with UK law and best practice and will be deleted in the appropriate timeframe.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

All Complaints and information relating thereto are treated with the utmost confidence. Such information will only be shared with those employees, agents or subcontractors of Dental Nurse Academy who need to know in order to handle your Complaint.

We may ask for your permission to use details of your Complaint (with your personal details removed) for internal training and quality improvement purposes. If you have given such permission, you may revoke it at any time by contacting your Complaint Handler.

All personal information that we may collect (including, but not limited to, your name and address) will be collected, used and held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and your rights under that Act.

INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

We aim to objectively assess every concern, evaluating its severity in the context of this policy. We aim to apply common sense and judgement, and commit to deal with allegations as quickly, fairly and consistently as is reasonably practicable. Our process will always involve two (2) senior management team members in any investigation, as well as a relevant Manager as appropriate.

1. Ensure the log is completed for this concern
2. Categorise the concern level of the allegation
3. Create an initial response to the allegation
4. Ensure the full facts are presented to the investigation team
5. Seek advice from regulatory/government body if appropriate
6. Reach decision
 1. Where “no further action” is the outcome:
 1. The record log must be updated including the justification for the decision
 2. A response will be put in writing to the individual concerned
 2. Where “further enquiry” is the outcome:
 1. A schedule for review will be created to determine frequency for updates
 2. An action plan for next steps will be created
 3. The record log will be updated accordingly

TIMINGS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

We aim to objectively assess every concern, evaluating its severity in the context of this policy. We aim to apply common sense and judgement, and commit to deal with allegations as quickly, fairly and consistently as is reasonably practicable. We will

- Respond as immediately as reasonably practicable (before investigation even begins) to acknowledge receipt and provide further contact information.
- Investigate the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the initial concern
- Take action within 10 working days
- Provide the appropriate response for resolution within 14 working days

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of this policy rests with the Chief Executive. Partners and Managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to ensure continuity plans and contingencies are in place on an ongoing basis. Each partner will ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the processes and arrangements referenced in this policy;
- Proper records are maintained.

The person responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy, including periodic departmental audits, and with responsibility for considering and taking action if any instances breach this policy is:

Elaine Mustoe (contact details below)

GETTING SUPPORT OR GUIDANCE

SUPPORT

Support can be provided by the Complaints Handler assigned to your case. Additional contact information is provided below if more support is needed.

GUIDANCE

If you have any questions or require further information about any aspect of this Complaints Policy or about our Complaints Procedure, please contact us:

- In writing, addressed to Course Director, Dental Nurse Academy, Biddenham Close House, 47 Church End, Biddenham, Bedfordshire MK40 4AS; or
- By email, addressed to coursedirector@dentalnurseacademy.com; or
- By contacting us by telephone on 020 4591 2333

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

SENIOR LEAD FOR COMPLAINTS

- Name: Elaine Mustoe
- Title: Course Director
- Email address: elainem@dentalnurseacademy.com
- Telephone number: 020 4591 2333

DEPUTY SENIOR LEAD FOR COMPLAINTS

- Name: Demelza Mustoe
- Title: Operations Director
- Email address: demelzao@dentalnurseacademy.com
- Telephone number: 020 4591 2333

POINT OF ESCALATION

- Name: Paul Mustoe
- Title: CEO
- Email address: paulm@dentalnurseacademy.com
- Telephone number: 020 4591 2333

REVIEW

This policy is fully supported by senior management (The Board at the DNA).

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually under the direct supervision of the Chief Executive.

LAST REVIEWED

October 2024

Reviewed by: Paul Mustoe, CEO

Signature of Paul Mustoe, CEO

Signed _____

NEXT REVIEW

October 2025