

# Complaints Policy



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing  
Awarding  
organisation

## Introduction

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation.

The CIH Awarding Organisation (AO) provides nationally recognised housing qualifications, regulated by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Scottish Qualifications Authority Accreditation (SQA Accreditation), Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation) and Qualifications Wales (QW). We are dedicated to providing the highest quality, relevant and up-to-date qualifications for aspiring professionals in the sector.

## Version control

This is version v2311 of the Complaints Policy. This document is for internal/external use only and is maintained electronically. It is the responsibility of CIH Awarding Organisation to ensure they are using the most recent version. This version replaces version v2308.

This document is subject to annual review, to ensure the currency of the information contained in it, with a change history to record any revisions.

## Version Number v2311

Title	Change	Date of change
Complaints policy v2311	Version control added Format changed CCEA regulation added as a contact	27 November 2023

## Complaints information

CIH AO aims to provide efficient and effective services and whilst every care will be taken to ensure that these are of good quality, CIH AO accepts that, on occasions, complaints will be made.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the CIH AO, our staff or contractors affecting a learner, centre, external partner, such as an employer or external contractor.

If you are dissatisfied with any element of our service, you have the right to complain. However, before you make a formal complaint, we would suggest that you talk to us informally in the first instance to see if your concerns can be resolved straightaway. You can e-mail [awarding.organisation@cih.org](mailto:awarding.organisation@cih.org) or telephone 02476 851 773.

If your complaint cannot be informally resolved a more formal process is detailed below.

CIH AO will treat complaints positively and recognises that they are a means of identifying improvements which can be made to our standards and ways of working. CIH AO will deal with complaints quickly, take prompt action to resolve the complaint and take steps to ensure that complaints of a similar nature do not arise in the future.

Centres and providers must have a policy and procedure for dealing with complaints. The centre/provider and learners must follow this internal policy before referring to CIH AO. If the complaint is not resolved this can be escalated to CIH AO. If there is an allegation of malpractice or maladministration refer to the CIH AO policy.

External contractors appointed by CIH AO must aim to resolve their complaint with their CIH AO contact in the first instance, before referring to the CIH AO complaints policy.

### **Confidentiality**

CIH will aim to ensure that your complaint remains confidential, but some circumstances may not allow us to maintain this confidentiality. In these situations, we will discuss this with you.

# Making a formal complaint

There are two stages to our complaints process:

## Stage 1

Formal complaints can be submitted via email to [awarding.organisation@cih.org](mailto:awarding.organisation@cih.org) telephone 02476 851 773 or in writing to CIH AO, Rowan House, First Floor, Suites 5 – 6, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8HS and should include:

- The full name, address and contact details of the person making the complaint.
- The detail of the complaint i.e., the specific reason for the complaint and any supporting information.
- The desired outcome of the complaint.

In making a complaint, we advise that you:

- demonstrate your attempt to seek resolution informally first,
- are clear, accurate and truthful in your explanation,
- indicate what might be a satisfactory resolution for you,
- respect the legal, regulatory, and other constraints, such as data protection, placed on CIH.

CIH AO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **three working days**. The complaint will be formally logged and allocated to an appropriate member of staff to investigate.

The member of staff will:

- commence an investigation into your complaint
- maintain a case file and auditable records
- aim to resolve your complaint within **14 working days**
- inform you if the complaint is going to take longer than **14 working days** to resolve, detailing why it is taking longer to resolve and providing an indication of the date by which a resolution will be provided.

The outcome of the investigation will detail the findings of our investigations, actions taken, and resolutions required where appropriate.



## Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you should direct the next stage of your complaint to the Head of Professional Services in writing.

The Head of Professional Services will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **3 working days** and give an initial explanation of how your complaint will be dealt with
- review the investigation and processes that have undertaken in relation to your complaint
- maintain a case file and auditable records
- aim to respond within **10 working days**
- inform you if the complaint is going to take longer than **10 working days** to resolve, detailing why it is taking longer to resolve and providing an indication of the date by which a resolution will be provided.

Please note that the decision of the Head of Professional Services is final.

## Continuous improvement

Where a complaint is upheld CIH AO will take appropriate corrective action to prevent a reoccurrence of the issue. All complaints are reported monthly and reviewed internally by CIH AO to ensure standards and ways of working are subject to continuous improvement. Complaints will also be reported to the CIH AO Committee and Audit and Risk Board.

## Further information

### Ofqual

If your complaint relates to a qualification regulated by Ofqual you may complain directly to Ofqual if you have exhausted CIH AO complaints policy. Please refer to the following link which will explain how you can do this <http://ofqual.gov.uk/complaints-and-appeals/>

### Qualifications Wales

If your complaint relates to a qualification regulated by Qualifications Wales you may complain directly to Qualifications Wales if you have exhausted CIH AO complaints policy. Please refer to the following link which will explain how you can do this <http://qualificationswales.org/regulation/complaints/?lang=en>

### Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation

If your complaint relates to a qualification regulated by SQA accreditation, you may complain directly to SQA accreditation if you have exhausted CIH AO complaints policy. [SQA Complaints Handling Procedure](#).

### CCEA Regulation

If your complaint relates to a qualification regulated by CCEA Regulation you may complain directly to CCEA Regulation if you have exhausted CIH AO complaints policy. Please refer to the following link which will explain how you can do this <https://ccea.org.uk/contact/complaints>

### Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Users of public bodies<sup>1</sup> in Scotland have the right to complain to the SPSO as the final arbitrator. Users have to exhaust the public bodies own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

The SPSO defines a complaint as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about [the colleges] action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by [the college] or on its behalf’.

The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an appeal and should follow CIH AO appeals processes. Please refer to the following link <http://www.spsos.org.uk/>

---

<sup>1</sup> The SPSO’s rules apply only to public bodies e.g. FE colleges and local authority centres. Students at centres that are not public bodies will not be able to escalate their complaints to SPSO.

## The Conditions/Standards/Principles this document applies to

Regulator	Regulation document	Conditions/Standard/Principles being covered
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition (January 2023)	I2 – Compliance with CCEA Regulation's appeals and complaints process
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition (September 2023)	I2 – Compliance with Ofqual's appeals and complaints process
QW	Standard Conditions of Recognition (September 2023)	I2 – Compliance with Qualifications Wales' appeals and complaints process
SQA Accreditation	Regulatory Principles (2021)	RP 16 The AB and its providers must have open and transparent systems, policies and procedures to manage complaints