Equine Behaviour Affiliation

Complaints Policy V1.0

Checked 23/12/24. Review date 23/12/25.

 **1. SCOPE**

The Equine Behaviour Affiliation is are committed to providing a high-quality service to all our customers. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our services to customers as well as an opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our aim is to ensure complaints are handled sensitively and speedily to enable us to:

• Demonstrate our commitment to clients, learners and other stakeholders

• Demonstrate our commitment to providing the best possible service

• Help to find out about things that have gone wrong so we can fix them

• Help to prevent things going wrong again in future.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by us whether justified or not.

**2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Sharon Smith.

**3. POLICY PRINCIPLES**

Our policy principles are to:

• Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use

• Publicise our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us

• Make sure everyone at the Equine Behaviour Affiliation knows what to do if a complaint is received

• Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way

• Ensure complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired

• Gather information which helps us to improve what we do

• Ensure that all complaint information will be handled confidently.

**4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Equine Behaviour Affiliation will not normally investigate complaints which are received more than six months after the incident or occurrence took place.

All EBA members are subject to the terms and conditions of their membership level.

If issues arise with a member of any level the following procedure should be followed:

**Filing of a Complaint**

All complaints need to be made in writing, emailed to the EBA Secretary at [secretary@equinebehaviouraffiliation.org](https://equinebehaviouraffiliation.org/complaints-procedure/secretary%40equinebehaviouraffiliation.org%C2%A0)

The complaint must include:

* Name of member
* Nature of the complaint
* Date of incident
* Location of incident
* Violation of terms and conditions
* Any other details relevant to the complaint to aid investigation

**Receipt of Complaint**

The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 days.

**Action Following Receipt of Complaint**

The Secretary will review the complaint and if it cannot be resolved immediately, will forward to the appointed Disciplinary Board.

The Board will investigate the complaint and inform the complainant within 30 days of the outcome.  As part of this process the member affected will be contacted.

In the case of serious incidents which may require further investigation and legal advice, a final decision may not be possible within 30 days.  In such cases an interim update will be provided to the complainant within 30 days and they will be informed of the next stages.

In such cases complainants will have contact maintained over the period until there has been a resolution.

The Secretary will be responsible for maintaining contact with the complainant and the member unless otherwise specified.

**Outcomes**

Outcomes following a complaint could include the following:

* No action
* Written warning
* Limitations on practice
* Educational requirements
* Mentoring
* Removal as a member
* Removal from an EBA course for learners
* Removal of ‘accredited’ status

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and will be dependant on membership level.

Should any complaint be due to breaking of a law or legal matter then this will influence outcome.

**Member Support**

EBA will support members throughout the process.

In the cases of malicious complaints EBA will support the member as appropriate, including with litigation.

**Confidentiality**

All complaints remain confidential between affected parties and the Disciplinary Board.

Should any subsequent changes in practice, ethics or learning be required then this will be anonymised.

**Alternative Contact**

Should the complaint involve the Secretary then complainants may contact the Committee member responsible for Membership who will advise on the required actions.

If the complaint involves a member of the Committee, they will not be involved in the Disciplinary Board or committee discussions on the matter.

All complaints will be logged by the Equine Behaviour Affiliation whether informal or formal. •

The complainant also has the right to raise any complaints to the appropriate Awarding Organisation or Accrediting body and or the regulators such as Ofqual, SQA Accreditation, Qualification Wales, or complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for Scottish provision if they felt that SQA Accreditation had not dealt with their complaint adequately.

Complaints procedure and contact details for a regulator or a regulated Awarding Organisation can be obtained from the following regulators website.

• For Ofqual approved qualifications (England, Wales and Northern Ireland\*) complaints should be made in writing to Ofqual, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH or emailed to complaints@ofqual.gov.uk.

• For Qualifications Wales approved qualifications (Wales only) complaints should be made in writing to Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane, Coedkernew, Newport, NP10 8AR or emailed to enquiries@qualificationswales.org.

• For SQA Accreditation approved qualifications (Scotland) complaints should be made in writing to The Optima Building, 58, Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ or emailed to customer@sqa.org.uk.

• Learners in Scotland may also make a complaint to the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** in writing to 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS. It is recommended that learners make an initial complaint to SQA Accreditation, however, this is not a mandatory requirement.

**5. COMPLIMENTS AND FEEDBACK**

We define a compliment as an expression of praise concerning a high level of service delivery and/or customer care received.

Acknowledgements will be sent within 5 working days of receipt in respect of all feedback and compliments.

Compliments and feedback which warrant a response will be replied to within 10 working days. Compliments and feedback may be communicated internally and via social media networks if applicable to external stakeholders and partners and with the customer approval.

**6. MONITORING and REPORTING**

The Equine Behaviour Affiliation records complaints and reviews these regularly to identify any trends which may have an impact upon other learners. Where a complaint is upheld, the impact on other learners is considered and action is taken to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.

Where it has been established that a complaint is valid, we will take appropriate action that will be proportionate to the gravity and scope of the occurrence. This will be documented at management meeting and added to the risk register.

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated annually or as and when required.