

COMPLAINTS POLICY

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken. A complaint can be made by an individual who has been provided a service by Contact Associates. You may wish to complain if you are not satisfied with the way your query has been dealt with by the company.

Principles of Contact Associates complaints procedure:

- Contact Associates Ltd recognises that complaints are an important part of customer feedback.
- All complaints will be investigated fully and fairly in a professional and non-confrontational manner.
- Complaints will be dealt with in confidence. The only exception to this is when others could be put at risk by matters referred to in the complaint.
- If the complainant is not happy with the result of the response to the complaint, he or she has the right to complain to the Student Loan Company (SLC) via their complaint's procedure
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company/about/complaints-procedure>

Contact Associates Ltd is committed to ensuring that its services are of the highest quality. The complaints procedure enables us to respond clearly and properly to complaints and to know when and why people are not satisfied with our services, so that we can improve them.

If your complaint is about Contact Associates, then there are three stages that you can go through to try and resolve the problem. If you need a sign language or community language interpreter, please let the person dealing with the complaint know; every reasonable effort will be made to provide it.

The three stages are:

STAGE ONE (INFORMAL)

Speak to the individual concerned or their line manager and try to resolve the complaint informally via email or telephone. The individual concerned is required to

tell you their name and who their line manager is if you ask them. Complaints made about a needs assessor will be referred on to their team leader or regional manager; this will still form part of Stage One of the complaints process.

STAGE TWO (ESCALATING A COMPLAINT)

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received at Stage One, you should follow Stage Two as set out below:

- Outline the details of your complaint by letter or email and send it to the Office Manager, Contact Associates Ltd, Suite D5B, First Floor, Victoria House, Victoria Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3FA. Alternatively, you can email it to admin@contact-associates.co.uk.

Your complaint will be acknowledged by letter or email within two working days from the date it is received. The letter will contain the following information:

- Name and work telephone number of the person who will investigate the complaint
- The date the investigation will start
- What support you can receive during the process of the complaint, for example, making information accessible.

You will receive a full response to your complaint within seven working days from the start of the investigation in writing from the person appointed to investigate the complaint. The response will include the following information:

- Details of the investigation
- A decision about whether the complaint was upheld or not
- The reason for the decision
- The redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to you, for example, an apology, additional help or direction to other sources of advice or support
- Any other action that may be taken in light of the complaint
- If it is not possible to provide a full answer to your complaint within seven working days, the letter will outline reasons for this and give a date by which a full answer can be expected. An example of this would be when a member of staff is on annual leave and is required for the investigation.

STAGE THREE (EXTERNAL APPEAL)

If the matter is still not resolved after Contact Associates has made its final decision, then the student may appeal to their funding body (i.e. Student Finance England/NHS Student Bursaries). Their funding body would expect the student to have followed all previous stages of the procedure above before they could consider the student's appeal.

Details of their procedures can be found on their websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/contact-student-finance-england>

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-bursary-students/contact-us>