



Yorkshire and Humber
TEACHER TRAINING

Complaints

Policy & Procedure

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Contents

Concerns and Complaints	3
Problems in School (section 1)	3
Secondary Trainees.....	3
Primary Trainees.....	4
Outline of the complaints process.....	4
Principles of the trainee complaints procedures (section 2).....	5
Arrangements for informal complaints (section 4)	6
For informal complaints relating to the course:.....	6
For complaints relating to SCITT staff or schools:	6
Arrangements for requesting a formal investigation (section 5)	6
Arrangements for mediation (section 6)	7
Arrangements for the review of complaints (section 7)	7
Arrangements for appeal to the SCITT Board (section 8).....	7
Procedure for resolving trainee (or stakeholder) concerns - Informal Enquiry Form	9
Introduction:.....	9
Some principles behind the use of this form:.....	9
Informal Enquiry Form.....	10

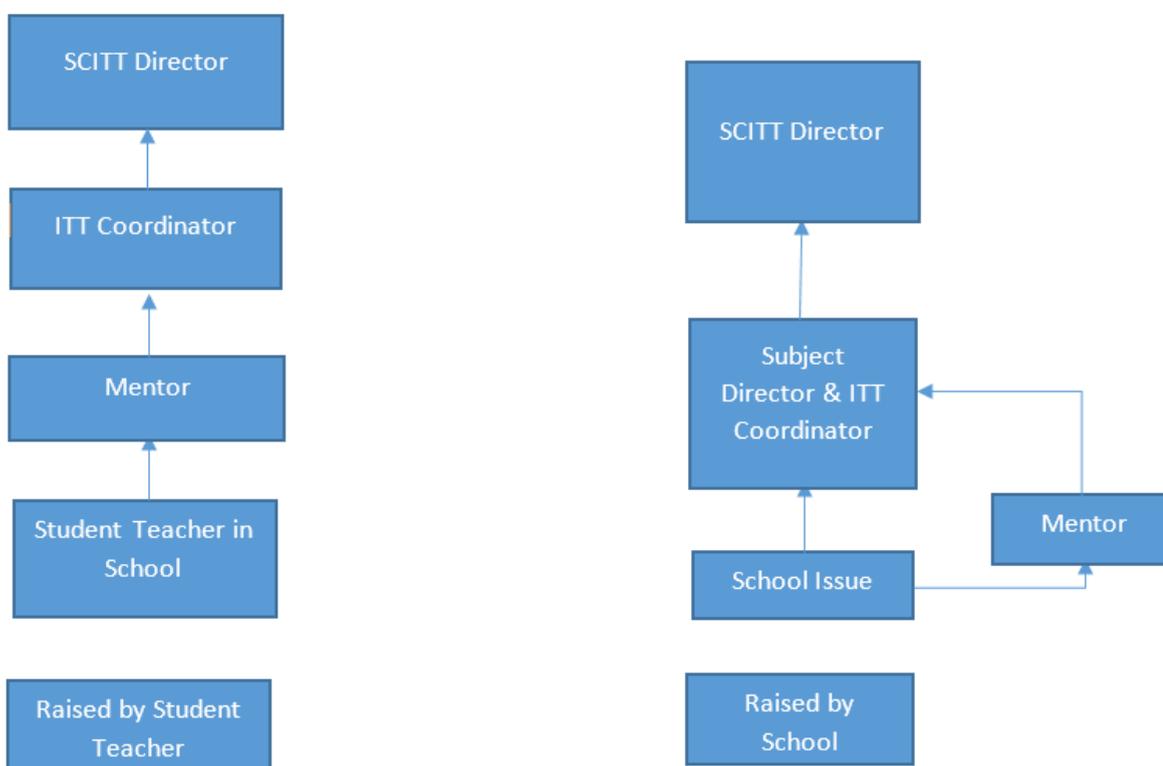
Concerns and Complaints

A complaint is defined as any specific concern about the SCITT or one of its partner schools, including provision of a programme of study or related academic or support service. The procedures also include the investigation of those complaints which may involve other trainees.

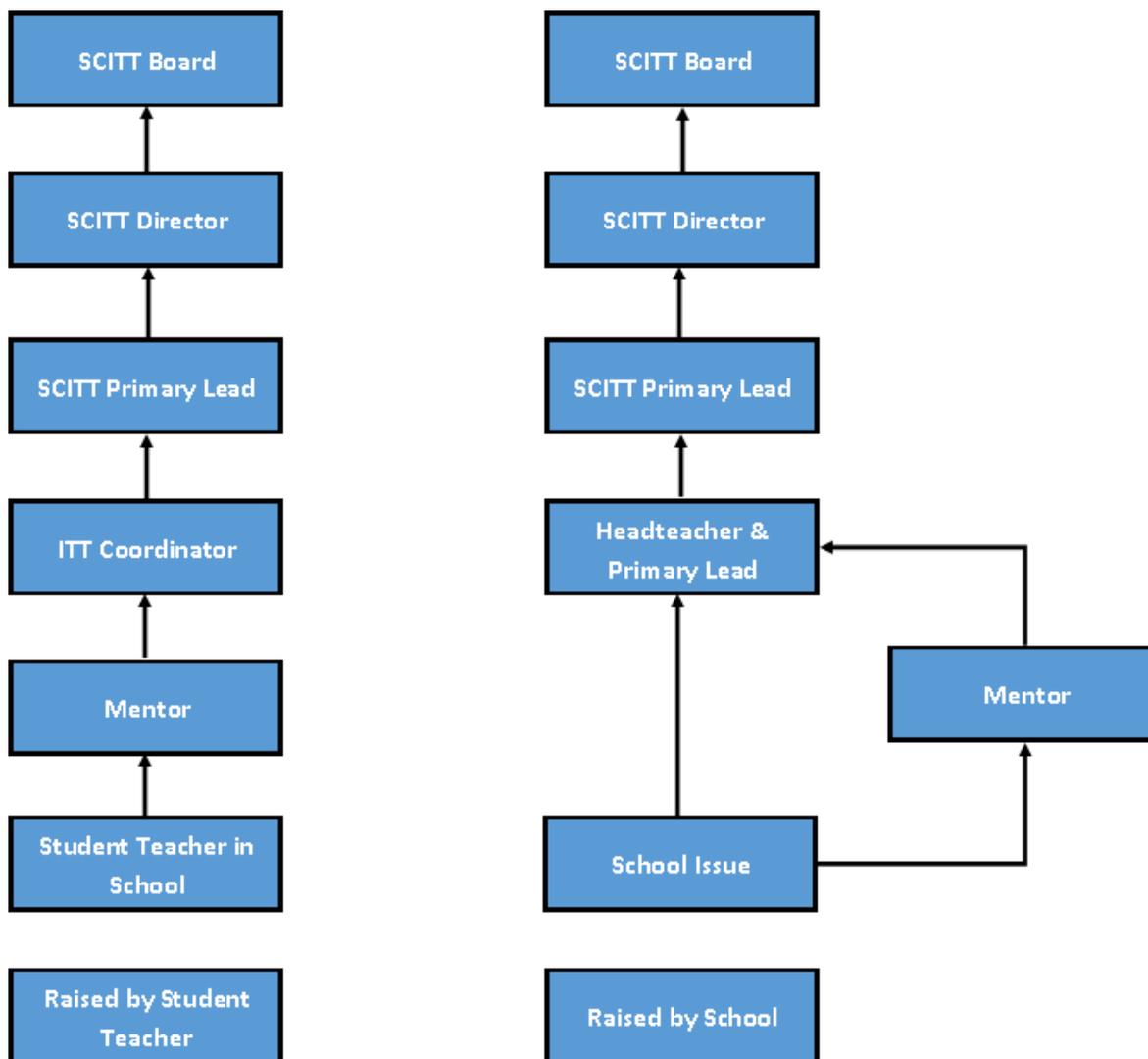
Problems in School (section 1)

From time to time it will be necessary to deal with specific problem situations. The key to resolving such problems normally lies in close communication between the school and YHTT. The flow diagram below shows the usual line of communication in such cases, although it will depend on the nature and source of the problem:

Secondary Trainees



Primary Trainees



Outline of the complaints process

Wherever possible, the SCITT seeks to resolve complaints informally, with complaints procedures operating, in the first instance, at the level at which the matter arose. The arrangements are set out in Section 4 of these procedures.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the trainee may request a formal investigation to be conducted by an investigator appointed by the SCITT Director. The arrangements are set out in Section 5 of these procedures.

If the trainee is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, the trainee can request mediation of the findings of the investigation. The SCITT Director will appoint a reviewer. The arrangements for mediation are set out in Section 6 of these procedures. If mediation is unsuccessful the procedure will then move to a review, as set out in section 7 of these procedures.

The trainee has the right of appeal against the findings of the review, or the investigation where mediation has been attempted, to the SCITT Board. The arrangements are set out in Section 8 of these procedures.

The SCITT Board will determine the appeal.

Once the SCITT Board has determined the appeal, the trainee may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for independent adjudication. It is not possible to refer the matter to the OIA until the completion of the internal procedures. The arrangements for making a complaint to the OIA are set out in a separate paper available from the OIA <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

At the completion of each of the stages where there is written communication, the trainee will be advised in writing of the means by which the matter may be taken further.

Principles of the trainee complaints procedures (section 2)

The Trainees' Complaints Procedures are designed to ensure that trainees have an opportunity to raise individually or collectively matters of proper concern to them without fear of disadvantage, and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

Where it is necessary to disclose the identity of the complainant to progress a complaint, the complainant will be informed of this in writing and asked to give permission for disclosure before proceeding with the complaint. There may be occasions when anonymity limits the extent to which a complaint can be investigated and/or resolved. If such circumstances arise, then they will be discussed with the complainant so that s/he can decide upon the course of action they wish to be taken.

The SCITT will respond to complaints and, if substantiated, will take appropriate action to remedy the complaint.

Since it is difficult to investigate complaints after a lapse of time, the procedures require that the Trainee must raise the matter within a given period of time, varying according to the type of complaint. These time limits are intended to allow a sufficient period for matters to be resolved informally wherever possible. A formal complaint must be brought within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally. No complaint may be made in any circumstances later than two months after the last day of enrolment on the programme.

Complainants are expected to follow the procedures as set out. However, discretion will be exercised, as appropriate, to ensure that complaints are not automatically discounted because of minor procedural deficiencies in the application.

At whatever stage of the Complaints Procedures the Trainee lodges the complaint s/he must declare herself/himself not satisfied within twenty working days of the date of the written response and request that the complaint be taken forward to the next stage. The absence of a response will be deemed to confirm the complainant has been satisfied.

Where it is deemed a Trainee is abusing the procedures through making complaints which are insubstantial or unsupported by a sufficient level of evidence, the complaint will be rejected at the earliest possible time with reasons given. Where apparently false and/or malicious complaints are made, the SCITT Director, under the Trainee Disciplinary Procedures, may instigate investigations.

Anonymous or third party complaints may be investigated at the discretion of the SCITT Director.

Where a complaint is upheld, the SCITT Director will take appropriate remedial action and the complainant will be informed in writing of the action taken.

Where a trainee instigates a complaint but then withdraws the complaint prior to its conclusion the same complaint may not then be reinstated.

The SCITT Director will log all formal trainee complaints, and make an annual return to the SCITT Board.

Informal comments and suggestions for the improvement of the SCITT are welcomed and should be addressed to the SCITT Director via the trainee reps at the Programme Development Committee.

Arrangements for informal complaints (section 4)

Most complaints should be resolved informally, since it is at the level of immediate contact that problems can most quickly be resolved and relevant action taken. For complaints of this nature, the SCITTs procedure should be as follows.

For informal complaints relating to the course:

The trainee should discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the Personal Tutor.

For complaints relating to SCITT staff or schools:

The trainee should discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the person providing the service, and then with their Subject Tutor.

In all cases concerns or complaints will be recorded on Informal Enquiry Form and will be passed to the SCITT Director.

If the trainee withdraws a complaint at this stage, then the SCITT Director will formally close the process.

Arrangements for requesting a formal investigation (section 5)

If the trainee remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the complaint further, then s/he should write to the SCITT Director within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally. A formal complaint must be brought within two months of an attempt to resolve the matter informally. No complaint may be made later than two months after the informal stage and must be made at least two working days before the last day of enrolment on the course.

A formal complaint should be in writing and must:

- Detail any specific concern about the provision of a course of study or the service provided.
 - Indicate the outcome sought. However, complainants should note that the outcome may be different from the one sought.
 - Be accompanied by appropriate evidence, where possible.

The SCITT Director will nominate a suitable person to investigate the complaint ('the investigator'). The investigator will then seek appropriate evidence to conduct the review. In addition, the trainee should be invited to speak with the investigator in person or at a distance, for instance over the telephone.

Where the complaint concerns the SCITT Director, the complaint is to be directed to the SCITT Board. The SCITT Board will nominate the investigator.

- The investigator should make a written response within two weeks of the meeting with the trainee, or the trainee declining the invitation to a meeting.
- The investigator is to provide a summary of the complaint, the findings of the investigation and, where appropriate, a Support Plan to prevent a reoccurrence of the complaint or to initiate further action under another SCITT procedure.
- If the trainee is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, the investigator will include in the written response that the trainee can request EITHER mediation OR review of the findings of the investigation by the SCITT Board. The relevant contact details will be provided in the letter. The

SCITT Board may delegate the investigation to another suitable person, who will make the decision on behalf of them.

- The trainee may choose either Mediation or Review, but not both. Mediation is more appropriate, for example, where the trainee prefers discussions to continue with a view to resolving a complaint or where there is an issue relating to attendance or trainee debt, with the assistance of professional support from Trainee Health and Wellbeing. Review is more appropriate where the trainee prefers a formal examination of the issues led by the SCITT Director or SCITT Board.

Arrangements for mediation (section 6)

If the complaint remains unresolved, then the trainee may request mediation within twenty working days of receiving the written response from the investigator. The request should be made in writing, and accompanied by a copy of the correspondence received from the Investigator concerned. The arrangements for mediation will be set out in the response from the investigator. Normally, the trainee will be directed to the SCITT Director, who will arrange for the mediation.

- The mediation stage does not preclude the trainee making an appeal to the SCITT Board, following the procedures in Section 8, against the outcome of the investigation conducted by the Investigator. However, the mediation stage is an established part of the process, and there is an expectation that the trainee would seek to reach an agreement at this stage in place of requesting a review.

Arrangements for the review of complaints (section 7)

Where the trainee requests a review of the investigation, the following procedures will apply:

- Within twenty working days of the date of the written response from the Investigator, the trainee may request a review of the complaint by writing to the SCITT Director. The SCITT Director will nominate a suitable person to conduct the review ('the reviewer').
- A copy of the correspondence received by the trainee from the Investigator should accompany the request.
- The person undertaking the review will collect such evidence as is necessary, which may include meeting with the trainee making the complaint, where this is appropriate.
- The trainee should receive a written acknowledgement from the SCITT Director, or investigator, within fourteen days of the complaint being received, outlining the approach to be followed.
- The reviewer may make a judgment on the subject matter of the complaint, and may either confirm or modify the decision of the Investigator. This will be contained in a formal written response to the trainee.
- Where a complaint is directed against a member of staff or staff in a school and is dealt with under this procedure, s/he will have the right to make representation.

Arrangements for appeal to the SCITT Board (section 8)

In the event of there being no satisfactory outcome at the mediation or review stage, the trainee may appeal in writing to the SCITT Board within twenty working days of the date of the formal written response from the reviewer or the conclusion of the mediation process. The SCITT Board will nominate a senior manager to review the appeal.

The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the decision-making process of the SCITT was reasonable, but not to consider the merits of case. Where mediation has been attempted and failed, the appeal will concern the investigation conducted by the Investigator, since mediation is a means of enabling the parties to seek a means of resolving their differences.

Where the decision is that the decision-making process was reasonable, this determination represents the final decision of the SCITT and the completion of the procedures.

If the determination is that the decision-making process of the SCITT was not reasonable, there will be a final review of the complaint by the SCITT Board's nominee. The results of this further review will represent the final decision of the SCITT and the completion of the procedures.

The nominee will arrange for the trainee to be notified of the decision in writing, and for a completion of procedures letter to be issued to the SCITT Board and Board of Directors of the accredited provider (Sirius Academy West).

Following the completion of the internal procedures, the trainee may take the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), and will be informed accordingly, together with the means of making such a referral.

Procedure for resolving trainee (or stakeholder) concerns - Informal Enquiry Form

Introduction:

It is the aim of the Yorkshire and Humber Teacher Training SCITT to provide the very best quality of training. In any organisation, there are times when informal and more formal feedback is required to maintain and continue to improve the quality of service. This form is one part of that process and represents a means of listening to the concerns of any trainee (or stakeholder) in a systematic and supportive way.

Some principles behind the use of this form:

An informal but recorded process

When a trainee has a concern (for example, about the support or provision they have received, or an on-going problem that appears to be becoming more troublesome) then a more structured discussion may be undertaken using the following approach.

1. The trainee will be invited to a meeting with a mandated officer from YHTT SCITT. The trainee may, if s/he wishes, be accompanied by a friend, union representative or any other person of their choice. The officer may also be accompanied if this is seen as appropriate.
2. At the meeting there will be a discussion about the problem the trainee faces and ways to resolve it will be considered. An informal intervention plan may be produced, if needed, following the meeting.
3. The interview will be structured by the use of questions that encourage reflection and problem solving.
4. The trainee will be sent a copy of the completed form.

A key principle behind this approach is its informal character. Unless the trainee raises a grievance relating to gross misconduct by an employee of the YHTT SCITT then any evidence and findings from this meeting will only be used as a way to resolve the problem or to plan how to.

Informal Enquiry Form

This form completed by:	
Role:	

Name of trainee or stakeholder:	
Date this form completed:	

Semi-Structured Interview

Please select the relevant questions.

Part one: Clarifying the Nature and Cause of Concern:	Notes and comments if needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has happened so far? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the effect of what has happened? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think anyone else been affected by this? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far, who else have you talked to about this? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they respond? 	

Part two: seeking solutions:	Notes and comments if needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What needs to be thought about now, and what needs to happen next? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you hoping might be the result of talking with me? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be the worst outcome for you? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be an ideal outcome for you in this situation? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think needs to happen to make this possible? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who else ideally needs to be involved in resolving this issue? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the best way to involve these people and when? 	

Part three: Deciding on next best steps:	<i>In two sentences can you summarise, for clarity, exactly what the complaint/concern is.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before deciding on what we may do together to resolve this issue how far do you feel we have covered the main issues regarding your concerns. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summary your concerns are as follows: (Write down the summary of concerns and read them back) 	

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Part four: Agreements for next steps	Agreed interventions
(i) It was resolved that YHTT SCITT will:	
(ii) It was resolved that YHTT SCITT in partnership with the trainee or stakeholder will:	
(iii) It was resolved that the trainee or stakeholder will:	

Part five* : if required, an informal review meeting will be held on:	
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**If both parties agree that a second meeting is not necessary part five may be waived.*