If you need to make a complaint about Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub, one of our tutors, contractors or one of your peers, the following process will be implemented.

There are 3 stages in the Complaint’s Procedure and each stage must be fully complete before proceeding to the next one. You are advised to keep copies of all the documents used in the Complaint’s Procedure.

**Stage 1**

It may be possible to resolve a complaint by discussing it with the person concerned. If you are still completing your course you must first contact your tutor who will ensure that your concerns are dealt with fairly and quickly. You should raise your concerns within 5 working days of the incident in question. Your tutor will either fully investigate your concerns and address accordingly or request that you put your complaint in writing. If your complaint cannot be dealt with by the tutor, then the written complaint will be passed to our Internal Quality Assurance Officer who will oversee and deal with the complaint on behalf of Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub. If your complaint is about your tutor and it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with him/her you may begin with Stage 2.

**Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1, or you feel stage 1 is inappropriate in respect of your complaint, or if you are no longer on your course, please put your complaint in writing and send to FAO Chloe Hale c/o Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub, The Clay Factory, Redlake Trading Estate, Ivybridge, PL21 0EZ within 20 working days of the incident. An acknowledgement of your complaint will be made within 5 working days of its receipt. Your concerns will be thoroughly investigated by a nominated person, usually the Internal Quality Assurance Officer. The findings of the investigation and its outcome will be sent to you within 30 working days from receipt of your complaint.

**Stage 3**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 you will need to submit details of your appeal in writing to the above address within 10 working days of the date of the response citing the outcome from Stage 2. You will need to substantiate any appeals with written factual evidence and/or signed statements from witnesses. The appeal will be passed to our Independent Complaints Reviewer who will oversee this part of the process. A response to your appeal will be sent to you within 28 days. All decisions made at Stage 3 by the Independent Complaints Reviewer will be final. Where an appeal is turned down, no further correspondence will be entered into.

**\*\**Please note that we cannot handle complaints or appeals regarding the outcome of external assessment as these will be handled by the Awarding Bodies’ own complaints and appeals procedure.\*\****

**APPENDIX 1**

**VEXATIOUS AND OTHER UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS**

Dealing with unreasonable complaints can result in significant resource issues. Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub also has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of its staff, which may be negatively impacted by such complaints. This Appendix sets out Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub’s approach to the relatively few complainants whose actions or behaviour it considers to be unacceptable or unreasonable.

Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub understands that making a complaint can be a stressful experience, and no action will be taken against any complainant where a complaint is made in good faith, but following investigation is not upheld.

However, there may be rare instances where complainants seek to hinder investigations of theirs or others’ complaints, or make false claims for the purposes of raising a complaint, or whose complaints may be characterised as trying to make life difficult for Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub, rather than genuinely seeking to resolve a grievance. In these cases, the complainants will be considered as unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and dealt with as such under this policy.

Where the investigation of the complaint reveals the allegation to be vexatious, malicious, frivolous or unsubstantiated, Devon and Cornwall Counselling Hub reserves the right to dismiss the complaint outright.

**New complaints**

New complaints from complainants who have previously been considered unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be treated on their merits. The Internal Quality Assurance Officer will decide whether any restrictions that have been applied before are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. We will not apply a “blanket policy” of ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are founded.