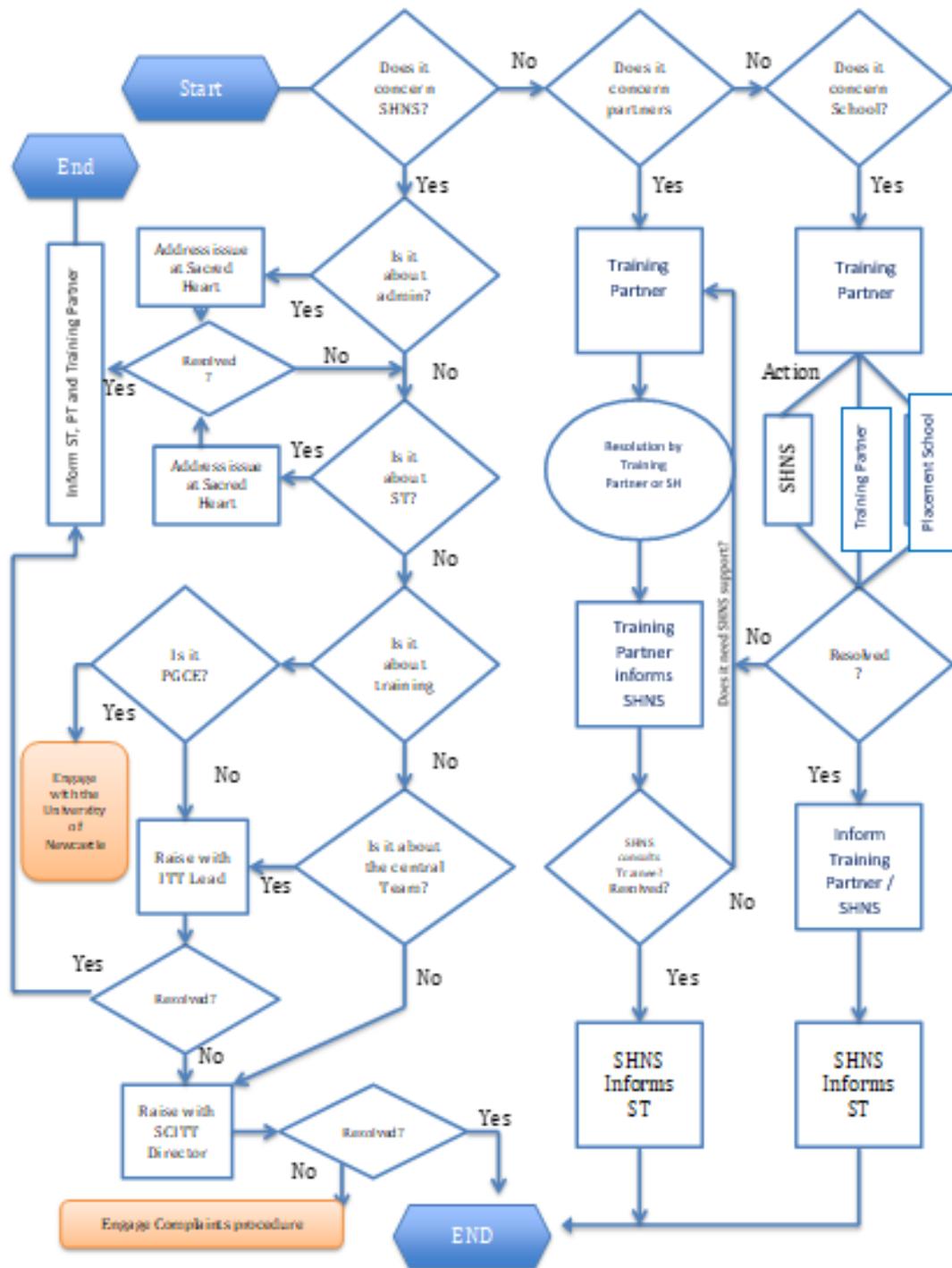


Sacred Heart Newcastle SCITT
Trainee Complaints Procedures



Trainee Complaints Procedure - Schematic



Trainee Complaint Procedure

Making a Complaint

The following sections explain what this means, and what to do if a complaint is not resolved satisfactorily.

Level 1: School or general training level (informal resolution).
To make a complaint a trainee must start at Level 1

Level 2: Head of ITT to review

Level 3: Director of SCITT/SCITT Board

After the internal SCITT processes have been exhausted, complainants have the opportunity to have their complaint independently reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Expected Time Limits

The OIA Good Practice Framework stipulates that the handling of complaints will normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal stage (Level 2).*

	Trainee	SCITT Administrator	Investigation
Level 1	Complaint should be raised within 1 month of cause for complaint	No involvement	Response will be communicated within 2 weeks of notification of complaint. If this is not possible, an alternative timescale will be issued to the complainant within the 2 weeks.
Level 2	Complaint should be raised within 1 month of outcome of Level 1	Will acknowledge receipt of complaint within 5 working days of receipt	*Indicative timescales for this stage are that a response will be sent within 6 weeks of receipt of complaint form to the Head of ITT. If this is not possible, an alternative timescale will be issued to the complainant.
Level 3	Complaint should be raised within 10 working days of outcome of Level 2 complaint	Will acknowledge receipt of complaint within 5 working days of receipt	*Indicative timescales for this stage are that a response will be sent within 4 weeks of receipt of complaint form to the SCITT Director. If this is not possible, an alternative timescale will be issued to the complainant.
OIA	Complaint should be raised within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter	No direct involvement with complainant	Variable

If a trainee fails to proceed within the given deadlines of the complaints procedure, they will not be able to progress through the internal complaints mechanisms of the SCITT.

The procedure has been separated into Responsibilities of Trainees and Responsibilities of those involved in the handling of the complaint on behalf of the SCITT.

Responsibilities of Trainees

Level 1: School or general training level (informal resolution)

You are expected to try to resolve a complaint directly, informally and quickly with the person/department concerned. In some circumstances, in the first instance, you may prefer to approach a different member of staff e.g. Professional Tutor, Course leader or SCITT Admin support.

You should raise the complaint within 1 month of the unsatisfactory circumstances occurring, at the latest. The sooner the matter is raised, the better.

You are expected to explain clearly what the problem is and what outcome you are seeking.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can escalate your complaint to level 2.

Level 2: Head of ITT, formal review

You should complete the Level 2 Complaint Form within 1 month of notification of the outcome of Level 1.

You must provide a clear explanation of how you attempted to resolve your complaint informally at Level 1. As a minimum, your explanation should include a specific date, a named member of staff to whom the complaint was reported and why the complaint was not resolved to your satisfaction at Level 1.

Your complaint must be substantiated by evidence. This may comprise one, or a series of the following types of evidence: a timeline of events, reference to relevant policies, procedures and/or regulations, letters, emails, independent medical evidence, witness statements, etc. Any evidence or appendices relevant to the complaint must be submitted at the same time as the complaint form and clearly referenced and labelled.

It is your responsibility to make your case. Complaints will not be accepted for further investigation if:

- your rationale for complaint is unclear
- you don't provide evidence
- you fail to include important dates, times and other details necessary for determining the eligibility of the complaint.

If your submission is unclear or unnecessarily long, you will be asked to resubmit the form in a manner that enables proper consideration of the complaint to take place.

You should send the completed form to the SCITT Manager via the following email address
SCITT@shhs.org.uk

You will normally receive an outcome letter within 6 weeks of receipt of your level 2 complaint form by the Head of ITT. If the investigation will take longer than 6 weeks, you will be informed of the reason and an expected date of response.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can escalate your complaint to level 3 on the following grounds:

- you believe that a procedural irregularity has occurred in the handling and/or the investigation of the Level 2 complaint and/or;
- you are in possession of additional evidence which may have affected the outcome at Level 2 but was unavailable at the time of the original Level 2 investigation and/or;
- you have a compelling argument to demonstrate that the outcome at Level 2 was unreasonable. Claims of this nature must be supported by evidence and a clear rationale for the unreasonable nature of the decision. Claims that amount simply to an expression of dissatisfaction with the decision will not be considered.

Level 3: Director of SCITT/SCITT Board review

You should submit the Level 3 Complaint Form within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the Level 2 complaint.

You must set out the grounds of the complaint by making reference to the above standards, and must provide evidence to support your claim, including proof of why new evidence being presented was not available at the time of the submission of your level 2 complaint.

You should send the completed form to the SCITT Director, louisa.connolly@shhs.org.uk

You will normally receive an outcome letter within 4 weeks of receipt of your level 3 complaint form by the Complaints and Conduct Team. If the review will take longer than 4 weeks, you will be informed of the reason and an expected date of response.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Once the internal complaints procedure has been completed, if you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA operates externally to the SCITT. It will not normally look at a complaint unless and until all relevant internal complaints procedures have been exhausted. Further information is available from the [OIA website](#).

Completion of Procedures

As required by the OIA, if we are unable to resolve a complaint to your satisfaction, and there are no further steps available to you, we will issue a formal "Completion of Procedures" letter. This provides a formal confirmation that you have exhausted the internal complaints procedure, and is required before a complaint may be considered by the OIA.

Other procedural points

Hard copies of forms are available to trainees who, for reasons of disability, are unable to access the electronic form. Please contact the SCITT Manager Joanne.Smith@shhs.org.uk for further information.

You have the right to bring a supporter to meetings arranged during the formal stages of the procedure. The supporter must be either; a fellow trainee, a member of staff, or a Union representative (e.g. NASUWT, NEU). The supporter may take notes on your behalf, make representations on your behalf and ask questions, but may not answer questions on your behalf.

Responsibilities of those involved in the handling of the complaint on behalf of the SCITT

Level 1: School or general training level (informal resolution).

Staff dealing with complaints are encouraged, whenever practical, to meet with the trainee to establish the precise cause of dissatisfaction, to explore the remedy sought by the trainee and to foster a mutual understanding of the issues involved.

The member of staff is expected to listen to the complaint and to try to resolve it in a straightforward, reasonable and prompt manner.

Although informal, the member of staff should make notes of any meetings and keep a record of the agreed outcome. Notes should be shared with the trainee. The trainee should be notified that the matter is deemed to be resolved and advised of the availability of Level 2 of the complaints procedure, if the complaint is not upheld or the trainee is dissatisfied with the attempt at resolution.

Level 2: Head of ITT to review

On receipt of a level 2 complaint the Head of ITT will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is submitted under the right procedures, within the appropriate deadlines, and in the required format with supporting evidence.

The Head of ITT will administer the complaint and will be accessible to complainants and staff at all stages of the process. If the subject of the original complaint is the Head of ITT, then the SCITT Director will conduct the review. If the subject of the complaint is the SCITT Director, the Accounting Officer will conduct the review.

The Head of ITT will ensure that an investigation is carried out. The investigation may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff. It will not normally be appropriate to keep the name of the person investigating the complaint confidential. The investigation and its outcome must be fair and reasonable.

It may be appropriate for the investigator to meet with the complainant and/or other parties named in the paperwork. Should the investigator wish to meet with the complainant, he/she will contact the trainee to propose this course of action and secure an appropriate date to meet. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to bring a supporter to this meeting. The supporter must be either; a fellow trainee, a member of staff, or a Union representative (e.g. NASUWT, NEU). The supporter may take notes on the trainee's behalf, make representations on the trainee's behalf and ask questions, but may not answer questions on the trainee's behalf.

If the Head of ITT finds in favour of the trainee, they may decide on whatever redress they think appropriate, bearing in mind the outcome sought by the trainee.

A report of the investigation will be prepared before a written response is provided to the complainant. The report will be provided to the trainee with the outcome letter.

If the complaint is not upheld, the trainee will be notified of the availability of Level 3 of the complaints procedure.

All outcome responses to level 2 complaints will be issued by the Head of ITT.

Level 3: Director of SCITT/SCITT Board review

On receipt of a level 3 complaint form, the SCITT Director will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the complaint is submitted within the appropriate deadlines, meets the criteria for level 3 review and is in the required format with supporting evidence. A complaint without adequate grounds and evidence will be dismissed.

If the trainee provides evidence to support the criteria, the complaint will be reviewed by the SCITT Director. If the Level 2 complaint was reviewed by the SCITT Director, it will be referred to the Accountable Officer of the SCITT. The Accountable Officer may appoint an appropriate nominee to undertake the review on her behalf.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve further investigation. In reaching a decision, the reviewer is expected to be fair and reasonable.

If the complaint is upheld, both the trainee and the Head of ITT will receive a written explanation of the decision.

If the SCITT Director does not uphold the complaint, the trainee will receive a written response giving reasons and a "Completion of Procedures" letter (see below) will be issued.

The SCITT Director may decide to uphold part, but not all, of the complaint and will respond to the trainee accordingly.

Decisions regarding liability for fees or financial reimbursement

Where the SCITT deems the refund of a trainee's tuition fees or a payment of compensation to be the appropriate redress following a complaint made by a trainee, the liability for the fees will be met by the SCITT.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Once the internal complaints procedure has been completed, if the trainee is still not happy with the outcome, they may take their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA operates externally to the Provider. It will not normally look at a complaint unless and until all relevant internal complaints procedures have been exhausted. Further information is available from the [OIA website](#).

Completion of Procedures

As required by the OIA, if we are unable to resolve a complaint to the trainee's satisfaction, and there are no further steps available to the trainee, a formal "Completion of Procedures" letter will be issued within 28 days of the outcome being determined. This provides a formal confirmation that the trainee has exhausted the internal complaints procedure, and is required before a complaint may be considered by the OIA.