



Trusted Standard Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Trusted Standard delivered by the Growth Company is committed to providing a high-quality, professional, and transparent service to all our customers. We welcome all feedback, positive and constructive.

Submitting feedback and comments:

All feedback, including positive feedback, concerns and complaints about the level of service provided or the performance of staff can be submitted directly via the channels outlined in this policy. The information submitted will be reviewed and passed onto the relevant team or staff member when sent directly to the Growth Company. We will also acknowledge receipt of your feedback directly to you within five working days. The handling of concerns and complaints is outlined below. In case of any dissatisfaction we recommend that first step is raise your concerns following the steps below prior to any formal complaint so we resolve this at the earliest opportunity.

Customer concerns:

We recognise that there may be occasions when you feel the level of service you receive has fallen below your expectations. Telling us about this gives us the chance to review your concerns and, if necessary, make internal improvements to our systems and processes.

We define a complaint as follows:

Any expression of dissatisfaction, whether oral or written, submitted as a complaint from or on behalf of a complainant about the organisation's provision of, or failure to provide, a professional and fair service.

If at any stage you feel unhappy with any aspect of our service, you must inform us as soon as possible. **In this first instance, you should first speak to the member of staff you have been dealing with and explain your concerns or contact us TrustedStandard@growthco.uk** Hopefully, at this point, we will be able to help resolve any issues you may have. Please note there is no appeals process that relates to an assessment decision, such as not meeting the standard, however any concerns relating to the professional conduct of an assessor that will be investigated.

However, if after discussing your concern with them you are not satisfied with the response you do have a right to make a formal complaint. If you wish to make a formal complaint, the process is explained below.

Making a formal complaint:

You can submit your complaints [through our website here](#) or via email at feedback@growthco.uk. Alternatively, you may send your formal complaints by post to GC Complaints, The Growth Company, Lee House, 90 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, M1 5JW. **Please reference the Trusted Standard in the subject line of your complaint** as we are a large organisation. If you are having difficulty or are unable to put your complaint in writing, please contact us using the contact details at the bottom of this policy.

What we need from you

Please include as much detail as possible about your complaint, along with your name, address, contact number and a convenient time for us to call you to discuss your complaint if you would like to discuss your complaint over the telephone prior to us sending you a formal, written response.

Why do we need this information?

We want to fully understand your complaint and why you feel our level of service has fallen below your expectations to make sure we get the right person handling your complaint, so they can investigate and provide a response as soon as possible. Your data and personal details will be treated in the strictest of confidence and in accordance with our data protection procedure.

Once we receive your complaint:

- We will send you a prompt response acknowledging receipt. This will be sent to you within five working days, using your preferred communication method (email and/or hard copy letter) and will include a complaint reference number that you can quote for future reference.
- Following this, your complaint will be logged centrally as a stage 1 complaint and a complaint investigator will begin to gather all necessary documents, recordings and information to make an independent review of the case. Investigations will use all the facts and any previous, related information to produce an unbiased outcome and an expected course of action. Should we require any further information during our investigation process, we will contact you using your preferred method of contact.
- We will then send you a formal written response within 20 working days from receipt of your complaint. This will outline the details of our investigation, how we reached our decision and any proposed resolution (if applicable).
- If you feel that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may request for it to be reviewed as a stage 2 complaint, which will be completed within 20 working days of the request being made.
- A complaint investigator will undertake a fresh review of your complaint, including all previous evidence and conclusions formed. They will consider any additional points of relevance that may have been submitted in the request for a stage 2 review; however, these must be pertinent to the substance of the original complaint and the complaint process that has been experienced thus far for them to be considered during the review.
- When a complaint is complex it is possible that we may be unable to finalise our investigation within the agreed timescales. On these rare occasions we will formally contact you in writing informing you of the anticipated date of completion, the reasons for the extension, and what steps you can take in the interim period.
- Following the issue of our final response, if you are still not satisfied, you can contact us to discuss escalation routes for you to take this further, which includes the option of an independent review of your original complaint, as well as our initial investigation and response. The individual responsible for reviewing your complaint at this stage will consult with you directly.
- For any complaints which have been copied to third parties, such as a Funder only as relevant and necessary will GC inform the third party of the overall outcome of the complaint.
- Any customer or stakeholder who makes a complaint is free to stop the process and withdraw their complaint at any point. Any withdrawal of a complaint should ideally be made in writing. We will, however, accept a verbal request to withdraw a complaint. We will subsequently confirm any request to withdraw your complaint to you formally in writing.

- In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will ensure that all complainants are treated fairly and equally and that we will provide adjustments to the procedure as required to ensure that it is inclusive. Steps we may take would be to change the format of our responses to best suit the individual and to ensure that complainants are not disadvantaged because of their Protected Characteristics. Where requested, we will support individual complainants to raise their concerns in line with the overall procedure.
- Individuals with complaints have the right to complain more than once about The Growth Company if subsequent incidents occur whilst we are providing a service to them. However, this contact becomes unreasonable when the effect of the repeated complaints is to harass, or to prevent The Growth Company from impartially investigating a complaint or pursuing a legitimate decision and may fall under The Growth Company's Management of Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. We consider access to our complaints policies to be important, and it will only be in exceptional circumstances that we would consider such repeated use as unreasonable – but we reserve the right to do so in those exceptional cases.