

## Advice to parents regarding complaints about academy trusts or community colleges

### Academy trusts

The regulatory framework for academy trusts is designed to ensure that they operate with a degree of independence from local authorities. This framework assigns specific roles and responsibilities to different oversight bodies. As a result, local authorities do not have powers to investigate parent complaints about academy trusts.

Trusts, especially those managing academies, are overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted, rather than local authorities. **This means local authorities do not have the legal authority to intervene directly in matters concerning academies.**

Parents are required to follow the academy's internal complaints procedure first. Only if the issue remains unresolved can it be escalated to external bodies like the DfE or Ofsted.

**The full complaints procedure in relation to academies is outlined on the gov.uk website. The direct link to the complaints procedures is [here](#).**

You may also find the gov.uk advice on complains about [academy exclusions](#) useful too.

Local authorities have powers and duties to investigate safeguarding concerns if they have **reasonable cause** to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering, or is likely to suffer, **significant harm**. This duty is outlined in the Children Act 1989 for children and the Care Act 2014 for adults.

**If you have a safeguarding concern about any child in Reading, you can contact our Single Point of Access (CSPoA) or the police. Full details are on our website [here](#).**

**If you believe a person in a position of trust is abusing a child or young person in any way, you should contact our [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#).**

### Community colleges and apprenticeships

If you have a complaint about any of the following, you should, in the first instance, follow their individual complaints' processes:

- a further education college
- a learning organisation that offers qualifications or apprenticeship schemes
- a sixth form college that is not an academy
- a learning organisation that offers courses for people who are under 25 and have a learning disability.

If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint was handled, you can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The ESFA does not deal with complaints about employment issues (for example, a problem with your contract if you're working as an apprentice).

**Full guidance on how to complain is on the gov.uk website. The link is [here](#).**