

National Modern Languages SCITT

Trainee Attendance and Absence Policy

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| Name and job title of author: | Katrin Sredzki-Seamer, Director of NML SCITT |
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SCHOOL CENTRED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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1. Introduction

This **attendance and leave of absence policy** is to assist the SCITT Director, Course Leader and Strategic Board of The National Modern Languages SCITT (TNMLS) in making fair and reasonable decisions regarding the attendance of fee-paying trainees and requests for leave of absence from its fee paying trainees. Salaried or employed trainees are subject to the policies of their employing school or trust and as such are not covered by this policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Cause for Concern Policy**, the **Fitness to Study Policy**, the **Disciplinary Policy**, the **Appeals Policy** and the **Complaints Policy**.

The over-riding consideration will be the impact of any trainee absence on:

- the learning of the children that are taught by the trainee;
- the progression of the trainee towards meeting the Teachers' Standards at the career appropriate level in order to be eligible to be awarded QTS; ensuring that the NML SCITT is compliant with the conditions of the document '**Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice, Information for accredited initial teacher training providers.**'
- the professional behaviour of trainees whilst on the course.

However, consideration will also reflect obligations to trainees in terms of legal and contractual requirements and moral obligations.

2. Purpose Scope & Principles

The responsibility for exercising discretion on behalf of the NML SCITT Strategic Board is the SCITT Director's in accordance with the scope of the **NML SCITT Strategic Board terms of reference**. The SCITT Director may delegate certain discretions to the Course Leader. However, any such discretions will be in accordance with the principles and guidelines within this document and within the overall authority of the SCITT Director.

Any dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence will be dealt with by the SCITT Director in the first instance but referred to the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee for a final decision.

A principal purpose in setting out this policy is to ensure that requests are dealt with fairly and consistently but within a framework of recognising that on certain occasions depending upon the circumstances, discretions will need to be applied by the SCITT Director.

3. Trainee Attendance on a Teacher Training Course

The National Modern Languages SCITT as an ITT Provider must ensure:

'C2.3 That training programmes are designed to provide trainee teachers with sufficient time being trained in schools, early years and/or further education settings to enable them to demonstrate that they have met all the standards for QTS. This means they would typically be structured to include at least the following periods of time to be spent in training in schools, early years or further education settings:...

- **A secondary graduate (non-employment based) programme - 120 days (24 weeks)'**

(Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice, Information for accredited initial teacher training providers, updated January 2021, DfE, 2017)

For this reason, it is not expected that trainees will be absent from the course during the academic year. Please be aware that absence totalling 10 working days or more may have an effect on your ability to complete the course and could result in an extension, withdrawal, a break in study or a C4C process.

The NML SCITT will show consideration with regards to absences due to a Covid 19 positive result and / or self-isolation due to Covid 19 in line with Government guidance.

It is the trainee's responsibility to check the NML SCITT training calendar before they begin the course and during the course for all course dates and to seek information about school holiday dates for the geographical area of the hub where they are hoping to train. The ability to meet the Teachers' Standards and be compliant with ITT criteria will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of at least 48 hours must be given to the NML SCITT Administrator for any leave of absence requests.

The trainee shall not be permitted to attend placements or lectures without the express permission of the NML SCITT Director should the trainee fail to make any payment of course fees before its respective due date. Such failure to attend will be counted as absence and may impact on the trainee's ability to gain QTS.

Any leave or travel booked before commencement of the course will not be honoured by the NML SCITT and could result in the trainee becoming non-compliant with the requirements of the ITT Criteria and therefore not able to gain QTS. During the course, any recreational activity should be undertaken in the trainee's own time and/or in school holidays.

It is the trainee's responsibility to inform their school, subject mentor, hub lead teacher and NML SCITT Administrator by email or phone of any absence from school, training or other activity as required by the course. The monitoring of absences will be reported to the NML SCITT Assessment Board every term. Please refer to the Absence section in the **NML SCITT Handbook** on the NML SCITT Intranet.

Where a trainee's professional behaviour is being affected by repeated or continual absence, the **NML SCITT Trainee Contract** details the responsibility of the trainee's placement school headteacher and NML SCITT Hub Lead Teachers' Committee:

*In the case of the other incidents listed below the decision on whether to exclude rests with the Headteacher in the first instance (these will subsequently be referred to the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee for a final decision according to **Disciplinary Policy**) and it is sensible to assume that exclusion is the likely outcome of such behaviour:*

- *Regular lateness;*
- *Regular unexplained or poorly justified absence.*

4. Extenuating Circumstances

If at any time during the programme, you are affected by extenuating circumstances, you must discuss this with your mentor immediately. Extenuating circumstances can include bereavement, physical and mental health issues, and difficulties in your personal life. It is very important that you seek help immediately and retain any documentation to support your circumstances. These documents will be required by the Assessment Board at The NML SCITT and the PGCE provider in order to make decisions about your progress.

If your training programme is interrupted by the unexpected death or onset of serious illness of a close relative, a fixed term of compassionate leave of absence can be negotiated with your placement school and the NML

SCITT Course Leader. This will normally be about two weeks to allow you to travel abroad if necessary, but it is essential that you maintain close contact with your school in such circumstances.

If you are unwell and unable to continue your training in school and/or at Day Schools, you should consult your GP who may declare you unfit to continue to train/be in school for a specified number of days and will provide you with a certified Doctor's note which must be emailed to the NML SCITT Administrator. Once you are well enough to return, you must inform the NML SCITT Administrator and your school. The NML SCITT office will retain a copy of any notes for our files. During any period of sick leave, you must keep in contact with the SCITT Administrator, your mentor and your Hub Lead Teacher. You should notify your mentor of the current progress of your classes but you should not be expected to provide detailed cover work after your first day's absence.

5. Religious Festivals

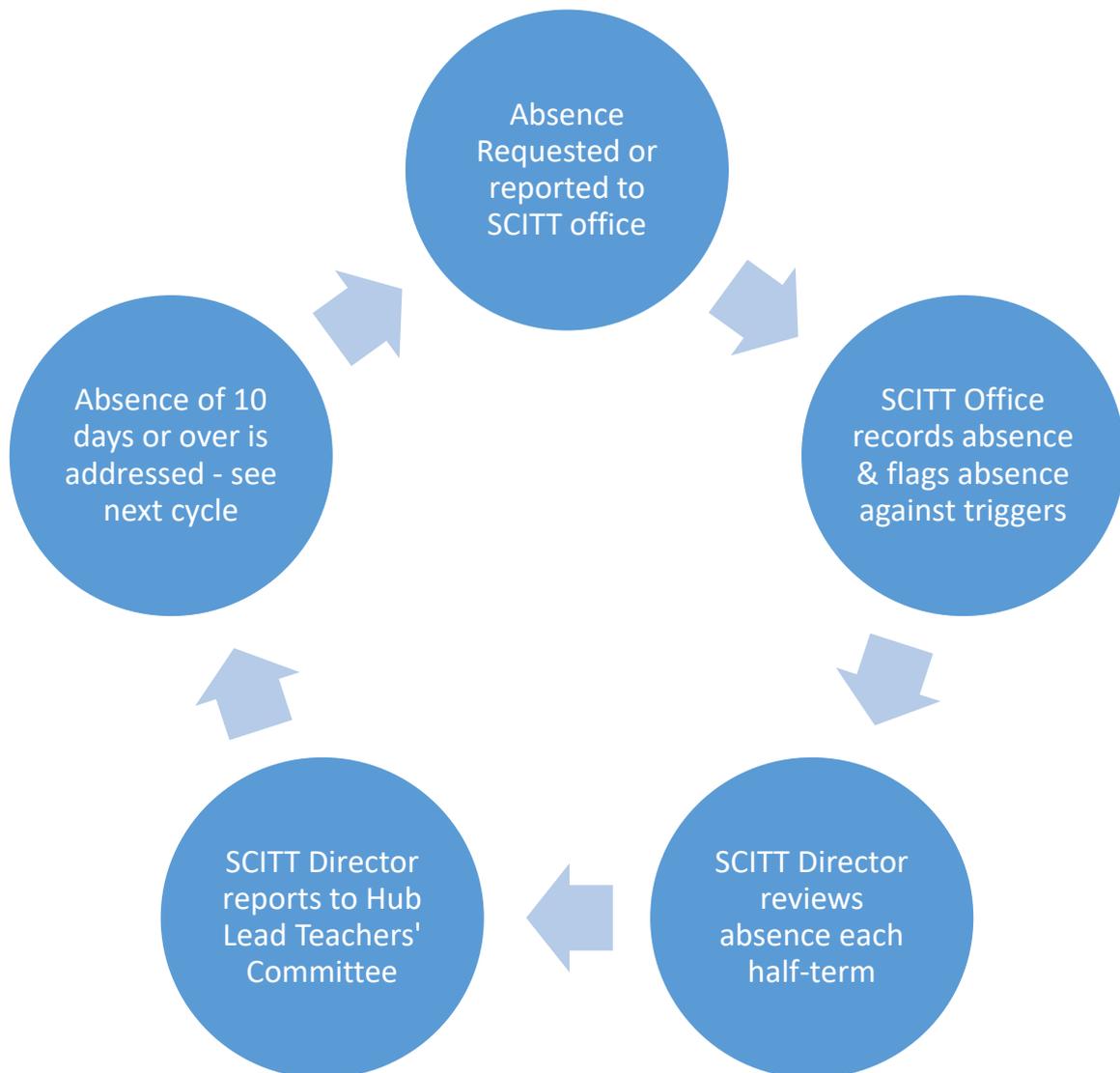
Approved absence for religious festivals: Your school will give appropriate and sympathetic consideration to requests for leave if you wish to participate in a religious festival not covered by UK public holidays. Where it impacts on your attendance at school, you will need to abide by the school's policy. Whilst requests to be absent to attend a religious festival will not be refused unreasonably and without adequate explanation, it must be appreciated that:

- schools must always ensure adequate coverage for your absence;
- Trainers/ Lead Teachers must be able to ensure you are able to complete your training successfully.

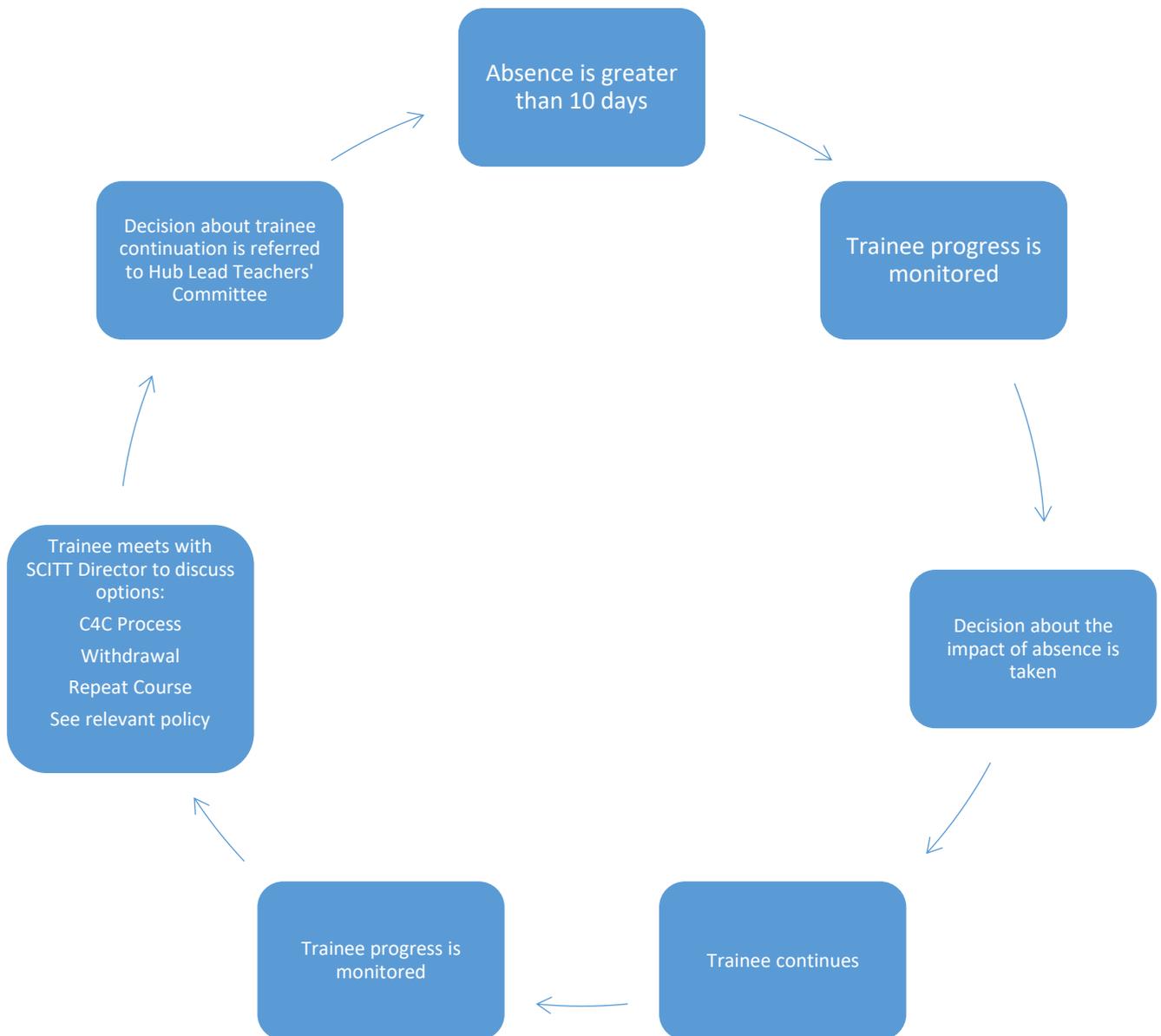
It is important that you tell us well in advance of the festival so that we can arrange for your absence.

6. Absence Procedure Flow Charts

6.1 High level process



6.2 Process for managing absence of 10 days or more



7. Procedure for the Management of Leave of Absence

This policy is applicable to all trainees enrolled with the NML SCITT. Please complete the **Leave of Absence request form** and submit this to the SCITT Administrator well in advance of your absence. In the case of any emergency, please submit the form as soon as possible to the SCITT Administrator.

The following is covered in this policy:

- Compassionate Leave
- Dependants Leave
- Parental Leave
- Paternity/maternity Leave
- Medical Reasons
- Public Duties
- Miscellaneous

7.1 Compassionate Leave

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|--|---|--|
| Serious illness of close family member or dependant or other 'urgent domestic distress | Up to 3 days | Please inform SCITT office and course leader of your return to the course |
| Bereavement of a close family member or dependant | Up to 10 days including attendance at funeral | Please speak to your lead teacher, mentor, and course leader if you need support with difficult circumstances. |
| Attendance at funerals for family other than close family members | Up to 1 day | |

Note:

Refer also to dependants leave. In such circumstances trainees are encouraged to discuss their personal circumstances with the Course Leader.

A 'close family member' is normally defined as a partner, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, or sister; however, this definition is not exclusive.

There may be occasions when a member of staff may request to attend the funeral of a close family friend as opposed to the person being a direct relative. When such a request is made, consideration will be given for granting time off for the funeral e.g. half a day.

7.2 Dependants' Leave

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Time off for urgent reasons relating to employee's dependant e.g. child, partner, or parent. | As agreed. | <u>Please inform SCITT office and course leader of your return to the course.</u> |
| <p>Note: Other Leave of Absence provisions may also be applicable e.g. compassionate leave.</p> <p>Child Illness: TNMLS recognises that there will be times when a trainee's child becomes ill and that may impact on their attendance at Day Schools, school, training or other activity. Where such emergencies occur, then TNMLS will grant leave for that particular day. However, a distinction does need to be made between what constitutes an emergency and non-emergency situation. For example, a child with 'a cold' does not constitute an emergency and TNMLS will hold an expectation that normal child care provisions will ensure that the member of staff is still able to attend work. Where a pattern of absence for emergency child care emerges, this will require further discussions with the SCITT Director.</p> <p>Where more serious longer term care arrangements are required in line with the Dependants Leave Policy, TNMLS will look to provide support for the trainee by advising them on their options to take a break in study or other suitable arrangement, please note that fees for the course are required to be paid pro-rata according to HEP rules and regulations despite absence or break in study being agreed. Such circumstances will be supported following personal and private discussions with the SCITT Director. Please see TNMLS Policy on 'Withdrawal from the Course'</p> | | |

7.3 Parental Leave

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Time off to care for a child under 5 (or under 18 if a Disabled child) | Up to ten days | Discussion with Course Leader and SCITT Director about the future of the trainee on the course. |
| <p>Note: Refer to withdrawal from the course policy for full details.</p> | | |

7.4 Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Time off for fathers or other individual directly involved in parenting a child (e.g. same sex partner) | 10 days (pro rata) (normally to be taken within 5 weeks of the birth) | Return to course |

7.5 Leave for Medical Reasons

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|--|--|---|
| Illness | As necessary. Up to five working days can be self-certified using a form from your GP after this period, you must produce evidence from your doctor in the form of a doctor's note which will stipulate the nature of your illness and the length of time you will be unfit for work. | Please inform your mentor, course leader and the SCITT office on your return to the course. We may need to discuss the impact of an absence of 10 days or more on your ability to continue on the course. |
| <p>Note: There is no need to complete a Leave of Absence form for illness. Please consult your doctor as soon as possible and keep all evidence of medical help including appointment cards, doctor's notes, and/or letters from medical staff.</p> | | |
| Emergency/Non routine Dental/ Medical Appointments (including investigations and treatments) | As necessary | Return to course |
| <p>Note: TNMLS holds an expectation that all routine dental and medical appointments will take place outside working hours. Where it is not possible to arrange a routine appointment outside of working hours, trainees may be granted a leave of absence subject to discussion with the Course Leader.</p> | | |
| Blood donation Cervical smears Breast screening Prostate checks IVF treatment | As necessary | Return to course |

Note:

Other treatments e.g. complementary therapy, cosmetic treatments, should be arranged outside normal working hours. Where it is not possible trainees may be granted leave of absence.

TNMLS will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to TNMLS Strategic Board. Should all absences total more than 10 days then a review of the trainee's progress will be undertaken and a decision will be taken about how to proceed on a case by case basis bearing in mind the *ITT Criteria* requirements for 120 days of training.

7.6 Leave for Public Duties

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|---|--|---|
| Magisterial duties | Up to 18 days per Year (in full or half days) | Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and course leader |
| Witness in court | As required | |
| Jury Service | As required | |
| Service in non-regular forces e.g. Territorial Army | Up to 2 weeks to attend summer camp Up to 3 days for short periods of training N.B Other provisions apply in the event of a trainee being called up for active service | |
| School Governing Body duties | As necessary | |

Note:

Leave for Magisterial Duties, Public Duties and School Governing Body Duties is subject to agreement of the TNMLS SCITT Director and Strategic Board. TNMLS will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to TNMLS Strategic Board. Should all absences total more than 10 days then a review of the trainee's progress will be undertaken and a decision will be taken about how to proceed on a case by case basis bearing in mind the *ITT Criteria* requirements for 120 days of training.

7.7 Miscellaneous

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Maternity Leave | As necessary | See note |
| Adoption Leave | As necessary | |
| <p>Note: Maternity leave and adoption leave are mandatory for employees; however, trainee teachers are not employees and therefore need to discuss the impact of this leave on their ability to complete the course. TNMLS SCITT Director will discuss how to support individual trainees in the case of maternity or adoption leave including discussing a break in study or temporary withdrawal.</p> <p>If you are receipt of a bursary to train to teach there are financial implications to taking this type of leave. TNMLS SCITT Director will discuss these with the individual trainee on a case-by-case basis.</p> | | |
| Student Union/Trade Union Leave | As necessary but subject to overall attendance being above 90% and no C4C process in place. | Return to course |
| Time off for religious observance | As necessary up to four days per academic year. Certain religious observance will fall within school holidays | Return to course |
| Adverse Weather | Refer to placement school's adverse weather policy. | Return to course |
| <p>Note: Generally, it is expected that trainees will endeavour to attend school, day school or other activity as long as it is reasonably possible to do so. TNMLS will use the status of public transport as a guide to what is 'reasonably possible'.</p> | | |
| Interview for first teaching post | 1 day per interview | Return to course |

7.8 Miscellaneous (continued)

| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
|---|---|--|
| Preparatory visit following appointment to first teaching post | Not approved until after course completion date | N/A |
| Course related examinations (For example IELTS) | 1 day per ½ day exam) | Return to course |
| Attending graduation ceremony of oneself, or close family member | 1 day | Return to course |
| Wedding | 1 day | Return to course |
| <p>Note: Attending your own wedding is not subject to leave of absence and is not expected to be planned in course time. A 'close family member' is normally defined as partner, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, or sister, however this definition is not exclusive. If you require to travel to the wedding this will be considered on a case-by-case basis but should not exceed five days.</p> | | |
| Reason for absence | Period of absence | Action after this period |
| House move | 1 day | Return to course |
| National team events e.g. Olympics | As may be approved | Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and course leader |
| Other circumstances e.g. 'once in a lifetime' | Would require withdrawal from the course or a break in study. | Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and course leader. |

7.9 Unauthorised Absence

If a trainee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the SCITT Director or fails to follow the correct *absence procedures* (sick or otherwise) this will warrant an investigation under NML SCITT *Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*.

If a trainee believes that they are not being unfairly treated or leave has been refused unreasonably, the issue should be raised in accordance with the ***complaints procedure***.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the NML SCITT Strategic Board in accordance with changes to legislation or terms and conditions, and its application will be monitored to ensure consistency and fair application.

Publishing policy

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our NML SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be request via our NML SCITT office.

Trainees who have exhausted the NML SCITT's internal procedures regarding Attendance and Absence may bring their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) within one calendar year of receiving a Completion of Procedures letter. The OIAHE's website (at www.oiahe.org.uk) contains full information, and the OIAHE can be contacted at: OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB, tel: 0118 959 9813 email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk. Anyone wishing to pursue a complaint through the OIAHE must complete a special Scheme Application Form, downloadable copies of which are available from the website.