

P103 Complaints and Dissatisfactions Resolution Procedure

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process by which any complaint or dissatisfaction expressed to, and about, the college is resolved. The College recognises that such expressions provide an opportunity to improve the quality of service or facilities that we provide. It is also considered important that complaints and dissatisfactions are recorded, and that they are dealt with as close as possible to the point at which they arise.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This procedure applies to all Further Education complaints and dissatisfactions, whether they are made orally or in writing, which calls into question any aspect of college service, provision, or performance in a manner, which suggests that standards have not been met. There is an additional policy for Higher Education provision and Higher Education students. This is available on the college intranet, Policy P103.a.

2.2 Complaints and dissatisfactions may take the form of a:

- verbal complaint or expression of dissatisfaction brought to the attention of a member of staff, made by telephone or in person.
- written statement of concern made using the College Complaints Resolution Form
- Letter detailing the concern.

2.3 A complaint or dissatisfaction may be brought to the attention of any member of College staff, and it is the responsibility of that person to ensure that appropriate action is taken in line with this procedure. The issue should be recorded on an incident form along with details about the complainant (and perpetrator where relevant).

As a minimum the member of staff receiving the complaint or dissatisfaction should ensure that the person expressing it is fully assisted in articulating and recording the issue of concern.

Ideally the member of staff receiving the complaint or dissatisfaction should attempt to resolve the situation, if it falls within their sphere of influence or responsibility.

If the complaint or dissatisfaction cannot be resolved it should be referred to the member of staff's line manager.

If the complaint or dissatisfaction cannot be dealt with by the Curriculum Leader, it should be forwarded to the Head of Faculty/ Operations Director who will organise for it to be investigated. If the issue cannot be resolved a complaint

should be made in writing to the Director of Quality, and should be investigated as a formal complaint.

In all cases, all issues should be recorded on an incident form and a dissatisfactions log and sent to the Quality Team maintained.

Any complaint about the Principal should be referred to the Director of Governance

3. DEFINITIONS

College Working Days Monday to Saturday inclusive.

Complaint A written statement of concern where the intention is that the concern should be raised immediately with a college manager.

A complaint that requires an independent and formal investigation

An oral expression of concern, that may be documented, where the intention is to seek resolution informally and quickly.

Customer Any user or purchaser of college provision or services (In the case of customers under the age of eighteen, this refers to the parent/guardian).

(a) Investigating Officer A College Manager or external person assigned to conduct an investigation on behalf of the College.

(b) College Manager Any Head of Faculty / Operations Director/manager or Senior Manager with responsibility for the issue under concern.

(c) Line Manager A manager with direct responsibility for the management of another member of staff.

(d)

(e) Senior Postholder The Principal or Assistant Principal

(f) Member of staff Any member of College staff

(g) Director of Quality The College Manager responsible for investigating formal complaints

(h) Principal's Senior L/Ship Team: Assistant Principal Curriculum, Assistant Principal, Quality and Student Experience, Managing Director Business Services and Deputy Principal

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Procedure flowchart (Appendix A and B)

Complaints Resolution Form (Appendix C)

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

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| 5.1 | Receipt of a complaint or dissatisfaction from a customer. Record the complaint/dissatisfaction. Attempt to resolve a complaint. Referral of a complaint or dissatisfaction to a College Line Manager, or Duty Principal. | All College Staff |
| 5.2 | Organisation of the local investigation of complaints or dissatisfactions. Communication in writing to customer. | Head of Faculty/
Operations
Director |
| 5.3 | Decision on whether complaint or dissatisfaction should be resolved by College Manager or referred to Principal. | Head of Faculty/
Operations
Director |
| 5.4 | Response letter(s) or personal explanation to the customer. | Head of Faculty/
Operations |

College Manager taking responsibility for resolution of the complaint or dissatisfaction

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|-------------|--|------------------------------|
| 5.4 | Formal investigation of complaints (except in the case of a complaint against a senior post holder or the Principal). | Investigating Officer |
| 5.5 | Formal investigation when the complaint is against a senior post holder. | Principal |
| 5.8 | Decision on whether a formal complaint is upheld. | Director of Quality |
| 5.9 | Dissemination of corrective action(s) arising from the resolution of formal complaints to the appropriate College Manager. | Director of Quality |
| 5.10 | College response to complainant where a formal complaint is being dealt with. | Director of Quality |
| 5.10 | Operation and monitoring of the College complaints/ dissatisfactions resolution procedure. | Director of Quality |
| 5.11 | Logging of complaints records on central database | Director of Quality |

- 5.12** Recording of complaints and production of complaint summaries for the Principal's Leadership Group and Corporation Board.

Director of Quality

6. RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to have a clear Complaints and Dissatisfactions Resolution Procedure policy or not following the policy may result in the inconsistent or unfair handling of complaints which could disadvantage the learner and mitigate the risk of a complaint being upheld.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Section One Impact Assessment has been completed for this Policy.

8. DATA PROTECTION

All notes, letters and complaint logs will be stored securely for a period of 5 years. Information about any complaints and actions will only be shared with other staff on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

9. PROCEDURE

9.1 Dealing with a complaint or dissatisfaction

9.1.1 The member of staff receiving the complaint or dissatisfaction will:

- agree with the customer involved the most appropriate way of dealing with the concern
- ensure the person understands that s/he has a right to make a formal complaint
- ensure that brief details of the issue are written down and passed to their line manager
- agree with the customer involved whether a personal response is required.

9.1.2 The member of staff receiving the complaint or dissatisfaction will attempt to resolve the problem if it falls within their sphere of influence or responsibility.

9.1.3 If the member of staff is able to resolve the issue, a brief note of the issue circumstances and resolution should be sent via their line manager to the College Manager responsible for the area to which the source of the concern relates, for logging. The member of staff should feedback to the customer that their concern has been addressed.

- 9.1.4 If the member of staff receiving the complaint or dissatisfaction cannot resolve the problem it will be forwarded to the College Manager responsible for the area to which the source of the concern relates, for investigation and response in accordance with Section 6.3.
- 9.1.5 Complaints investigated at local level by the appropriate College Manager should be completed within FIFTEEN working days from the receipt of the complaint. The College Manager should provide feedback to the customer the outcome of the investigation. The complaint should be logged in the College “Complaints and Dissatisfactions” database.
- 9.1.6 Where a complaint is investigated locally and a response is provided which does not satisfy the complainant, then the complainant must be offered the opportunity to make the complaint to the Principal directly.
- 9.1.7 All complaints forwarded to the Director of Quality will be logged and investigated.

9.2 Acknowledgement and Logging

- 9.2.1 All complaints and dissatisfactions should be recorded either by the appropriate College Manager and forwarded to the Director of Quality.
- 9.2.2. Complaints will be logged and stored centrally in the same way as records of incidents are recorded and stored. Hard copy information and responses should be stored and archived securely in accordance with data protection.
- 9.2.3 It is important that a response is made to all complaints and dissatisfactions except where agreed with the customer. (See 9.1.1. above).
- 9.2.4 The Director of Quality will produce a report of all complaints and dissatisfactions on an annual basis.
- 9.2.5 On receipt of a formal complaint by the Director of Quality it will be dated and logged. The formal complaint will be acknowledged within **six** working days of receipt by the Director of Quality stating that the matter is under investigation and giving an indication of the date when the customer can expect a reply. If this date is not met then a letter will be sent updating the customer and modifying the scheduled completion date.

9.3 The Formal Complaints Resolution Investigation

- 9.3.1 All formal complaints requiring an investigation will be supervised the Director of Quality. The Director of Quality will appoint an investigating officer.
- 9.3.2 Formal Complaints investigated by an appointed investigating officer should be completed within 15 working days, or as soon as possible thereafter, from receipt of the complaint. At the conclusion of the investigation the investigating officer will present the findings to the Director of Quality. The Director of Quality will make a decision on the basis of the outcome of the investigation, identify any points for corrective action and inform the relevant Head of Faculty.

The Director of Quality will respond to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation.

9.3.1 The Director of Quality will deal with the outcome of the complaint and draw to the attention of the appropriate College Manager any recommended corrective action arising.

9.3.2 For students undertaking NEBOSH programmes, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, it can be escalated to NEBOSH and then to SQA accreditation. Information regarding the NEBOSH Complaints procedure is available on Appendix E.

9.4 Complaints against a member of staff

9.4.1 In the event of a complaint being made against a member of staff, or if during an investigation it is found that a member of staff may have failed to carry out proper procedures or has not acted with integrity or competence the Line Manager should be informed and the procedure below followed.

9.4.2 If the complaint refers to a matter of procedure or failing to meet standards, the Line Manager should deal with it through normal performance management processes.

9.4.3 If the complaint is a potential case of misconduct or gross misconduct, the line manager should refer the matter to the Executive Director of Human Resources. Where an investigation is instigated, the complaint will be supervised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will appoint an investigating officer. The investigating officer should follow the guidance for investigating officers provided in Appendix A.

9.4.4 At the conclusion of the investigation the investigating officer will present the findings to the assigned Senior Postholder. The Principal's Senior Leadership Team member will recommend a course of action to the Principal.

9.4.5 Complaints against the Principal should be referred to the Director of Governance

9.4.6 Complaints against a member of the Principal's Senior Leadership Team should be referred to the Principal.

9.5 Corrective Action and Reporting

9.5.1 Where a complaint or dissatisfaction concerns a procedural failure corrective action must be taken to improve the service and this should be logged.

9.5.2 Heads of Faculty should ensure that complaints and dissatisfactions logged at a local level are periodically reviewed and staff informed of the complaints and

the action taken. Faculty teams should do this at “course team” level, through course team meetings.

9.5.3 The Director of Quality will monitor the complaints system and prepare analyses of complaints for the Principal’s Leadership Team and the Corporation Board.

9.6 Evaluation of the Complaints Procedure

9.6.1 The Director of Quality will monitor the Complaints and Dissatisfactions Procedure.