

Complaints Handling Report

Annual Report for Academic Year 2016/17

September 2017

Summary

In Academic Year 2016/17, Glasgow Kelvin College received a total of 53 complaints and 27 commendations were made.

During Academic Year 2016/17, the monitor for logging complaints was re-vamped, new complaints categories were implemented (as agreed by the National Complaints Handling Advisory Group) and several members of the Administration team were trained in relation to logging and responding to complaints. Three members of the Administration team also attended a “Learning from Complaints” event delivered by the College Development Network in partnership with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Glasgow Kelvin College extended the deadline for responding to Stage 1 complaints from 5 days to 10 days during busy periods with the proviso that a response within 5 days would be sought as often as possible – refer to Appendix 1 for procedures.

In relation to Stage 1 complaints, a response within the timescales as outlined above was met 100% of the time.

In relation to Stage 2 complaints, a response within the 20 day timescale was achieved 58% of the time. This has mainly been due to relevant investigating managers requiring additional time for more complex complaints, arranging resolution meetings around complainant’s availability, strike action impact and the summer annual leave period. When further time is required to investigate complaints, complainants are kept informed of any delays and are provided with timescales as to when to expect a response as per SPSO complaints handling processes guidelines.

The categories that have received the most complaints are as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| Staff Conduct | - | 12 Complaints |
| Estates(including Maintenance, Lifts and Car Parking) | - | 6 Complaints |
| Application, Admission, Interview | - | 6 Complaints |
| Student Conduct | - | 5 Complaints |

This is further explained as follows:

Staff Conduct

This category is wide-ranging with complaints received about class preparation, timekeeping, attitude/tone, remarks and perceptions of favouritism. Out of the 12 complaints received only 4 have been upheld and 2 partially upheld.

Estates

This category again is wide-ranging and covers car parking, College facilities, buildings and grounds. Most of the complaints received are in relation to car parking issues at our Springburn Campus. Springburn Campus is the busiest campus by far and there are significant pressure on available parking; this has caused some tension. A Cycle Shelter is in the process of being installed to encourage staff and students to travel in a greener manner. There have also been complaints about individuals smoking in non-smoking areas; again the College is considering installing smoking shelters to alleviate any re-occurring issues.

Application, Admission, Interview

Complaints in this area are extremely low given the volume of applications, however, the complaints received are in relation to course placements, perceived lack of organisation by the Admissions Department.

Student Conduct

Complaints received have mainly been in relation to unwelcome remarks made in person or on social media. Again, the number of complaints is incredibly low compared to the number of students studying at Glasgow Kelvin College.

With all complaints received, the College attempts to learn from where complaints have arisen to prevent any further concerns or re-occurrences. As such, the Director of Corporate Services Chairs the Complaints Forum Group – refer to Appendix 2 for membership. This group meets 3 times per year and improvements are suggested and thereafter implemented for continuous progression.

It should be noted that the Director of Corporate Services continues to oversee and sign off all complaint responses to ensure uniformity and fairness of response.

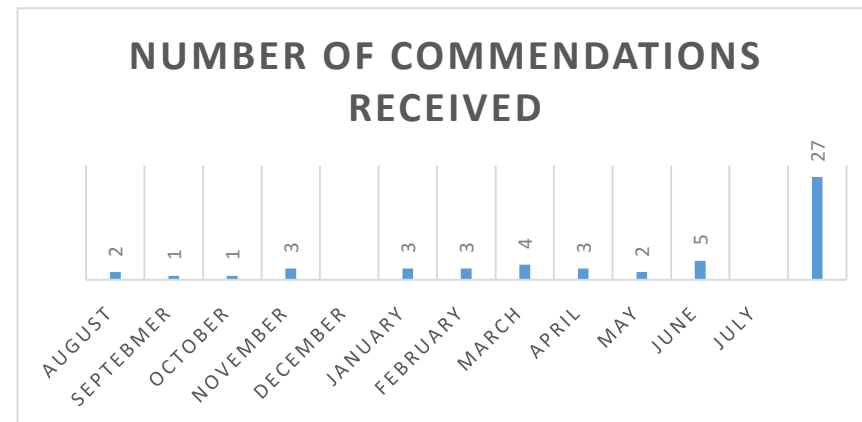
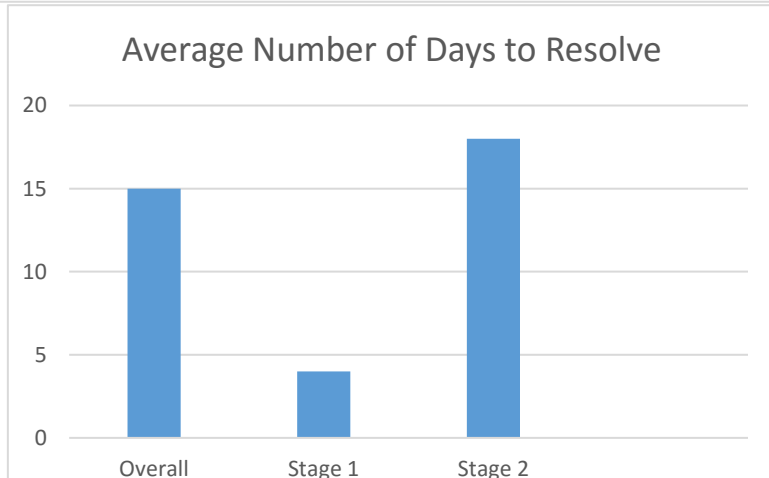
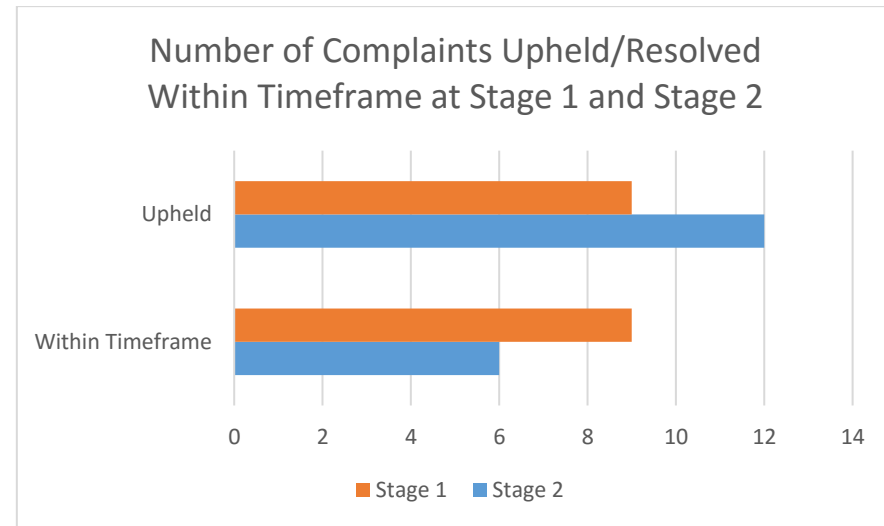
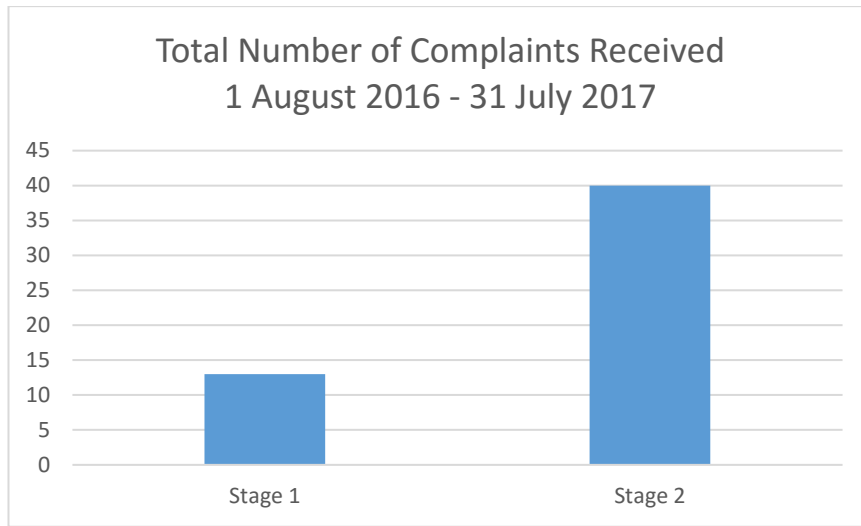
Additional work will continue to enhance the complaints system over Academic Year 2017/18 including the installation of sub categories under the main headings of the complaints in order that complaints received are fully understood by all members of the Complaints Forum Group and the College as a whole.

The Commendations and Complaints database will continue to be enhanced to ensure ease of report generation and records management.

Performance Indicators¹

| | No. | % |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Total Complaints - Stage 1 and Stage 2 | | |
| Total number of complaints received | 53 | - |
| Total number and percentage of complaints closed within relevant timeline | 37 | 69 |
| Total number and percentage of complaints where an extension was authorised | 15 | 28 |
| Total number and percentage of complaints upheld | 21 | 39 |
| Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed | 4 | 7.5 |
| Average time in working days to resolve complaints | 15 | - |
| Stage 1 - Frontline | | |
| Number and percentage of complaints received | 13 | 24 |
| Number and percentage of complaints closed within 10 working days | 13 | 100 |
| Number and percentage closed where an extension was authorised | 0 | 0 |
| Number of complaints upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage | 9 | 69 |
| Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage | 0 | 0 |
| Average time in working days to resolve complaints | 4 | - |
| Stage 2 - Investigation | | |
| Number and percentage of complaints considered | 40 | 75 |
| Number and percentage of complaints resolved within 20 working days | 24 | 60 |
| Number and percentage of complaints where an extension to 20 working days was authorised | 16 | 40 |
| Number of complaints upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage | 12 | 30 |
| Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage | 4 | 10 |
| Average time in working days to resolve complaints | 18 | - |

¹ Data relating to complaints received from 1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017.

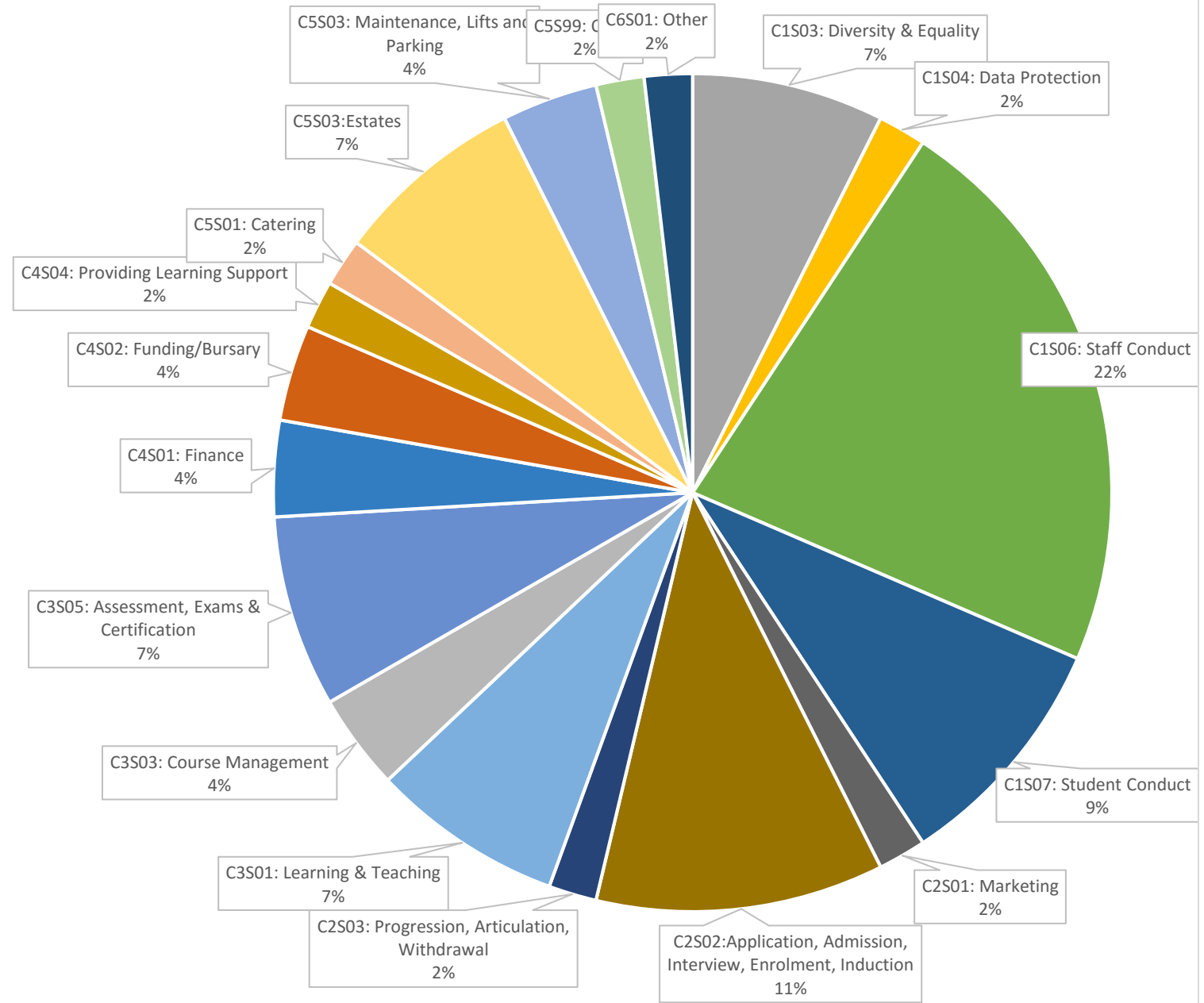


Complaint Categories

| Category 1: Customer Care | No. Complaints | Category 4: Services | No. Complaints |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| C1S01: Health & Safety | | C4S01: Finance | 2 |
| C1S02: Security | | C4S02: Funding/Bursary | 2 |
| C1S03: Diversity & Equality | 4 | C4S03: Student Records | |
| C1S04: Data Protection | 1 | C4S04: Providing Learning Support | 1 |
| C1S05: Environmental | | C4S05: Library/Learning Technology | |
| C1S06: Staff Conduct | 12 | C4S06: Quality etc. | |
| C1S07: Student Conduct | 5 | C4S99: Other | |
| C1S99: Other | | | |
| | | Category 5: Facilities | |
| Category 2: Applications, Admissions, | | C5S01: Catering | 1 |
| C2S01: Marketing | 1 | C5S02: Student Accommodation | |
| C2S02: Application, Admission, Interview | 6 | C5S03: Estates | 4 |
| C2S03: Progression, Articulation | 1 | C5S03: Maintenance, Lifts and Car | 2 |
| Withdrawal | | Parking | |
| C2S99: Other | | C5S99: Other | |
| | | | |
| Category 3: Course Related | | Category 6: Other | |
| C3S01: Learning & Teaching | 4 | C6S01: Other | 1 |
| C3S02: Environment/Resources | | | |
| C3S03: Course Management | 2 | | |
| C3S04: Facilitated Learning & Support | | | |
| C3S05: Assessment, Exams & Certification | 4 | | |
| C3S99: Other | | | |

Categories of Complaint

- C1S01: Health & Safety
- C1S02: Security
- C1S03: Diversity & Equality
- C1S04: Data Protection
- C1S05: Environmental
- C1S06: Staff Conduct
- C1S07: Student Conduct
- C1S99: Other
- C2S01: Marketing
- C2S02: Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction
- C2S03: Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal
- C2S99: Other
- C3S01: Learning & Teaching
- C3S02: Environment/Resources
- C3S03: Course Management
- C3S04: Facilitated Learning & Support
- C3S05: Assessment, Exams & Certification
- C3S99: Other
- C4S01: Finance
- C4S02: Funding/Bursary
- C4S03: Student Records
- C4S04: Providing Learning Support
- C4S05: Library/Learning Technology
- C4S06: Quality etc.
- C4S99: Other
- C5S01: Catering
- C5S02: Student Accommodation
- C5S03: Estates
- C5S03: Maintenance, Lifts and Parking
- C5S99: Other



Appendix 1

Summary Guide to the Commendations and Complaints Procedures and Complaints Handling Process

Summary Guide

Glasgow Kelvin College takes all commendations and complaints seriously:

1. Commendations confirm the achievement of high standards, which we aim to provide; and
2. Complaints are an extremely useful form of feedback allowing us to ensure that we continue to improve our service.

Commendations

1. Will be passed to the Senior Management Team for consideration and, as appropriate, action.
2. A central record will be kept and regularly reviewed by the SMT, the Board's Learning & Teaching Committee and, as appropriate, other Committees/ Senior Staff.

Complaints

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- failure to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service
- our policies
- behaviour of students, staff or contractors

A complaint **is not**:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a disagreement with academic judgement
- a Data Protection or Freedom of Information request for information
- an academic appeal- where a learner disputes a grade/ seeks additional opinion on assessment decisions*

Where these are:

1. fairly straightforward and do not require an investigation to be carried out we will aim to resolve them within 5 working days;
2. more serious **and** involve an investigation;
 - you will be advised, normally within 3 working days, that the matter is being investigated; **and**
 - we will, normally within 20 working days, complete the investigation and advise you of the outcome. *(If this is not possible you will be informed of the likely timescale for a full response.)*
3. about a member of the College's Senior Management Team, including the Principal, they should be submitted directly to Douglas Wilson, Clerk to the Board of Management [at douglaswilson@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](mailto:douglaswilson@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk) . He will investigate the matter, aiming to respond within the timescales outlined above.
4. About the College's staff recruitment process/ procedures these will be addressed in line with Section 14 of the Recruitment and selection policy.

If you are unhappy with regard to the outcome from the above, then the matter can be further reviewed as appropriate. **Learners retain the right to complain/appeal directly to their awarding body where they remain dissatisfied with the college response.*

Contact us:

In person, speak to a member of staff who will guide you to a complaints administrator

By phone, on: **0141 630 5000**

By e-mail [to: complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk)

In writing, as follows: letters should be addressed to

"The College Complaints Handler"

Glasgow Kelvin College

123 Flemington Street

Springburn

Glasgow, G21 4TD

College [Complaints forms](#) (available from Reception and on the College website) which should be submitted via Reception, marked for the attention of "The College Complaints Handler"

The College's Complaints Handler will:

1. maintain central records, co-ordinate investigations and refer items, to the appropriate College manager, for action;
2. support managers, where required, to conduct investigations, track progress/outcomes and report regularly to the SMT; and
3. prepare reports for consideration by the Principal, The Board of Management and, as appropriate, other Committees/ Senior Staff.

It is vitally important that contact details are provided when a complaint is lodged, this allows the College to follow up on complaints when they are made and to ensure those who complain are given timely feedback and resolution where appropriate.

If you remain dissatisfied

In some circumstances, you may appeal to the Scottish Public Services' Ombudsman (SPSO). Their service is both free and independent.

In Person
SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

In Writing:
SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR
(**Freepost** means you do not need to put a stamp on the envelope)

Freephone **0800 377 7330** (**Freephone** means you do not have to pay for this call)

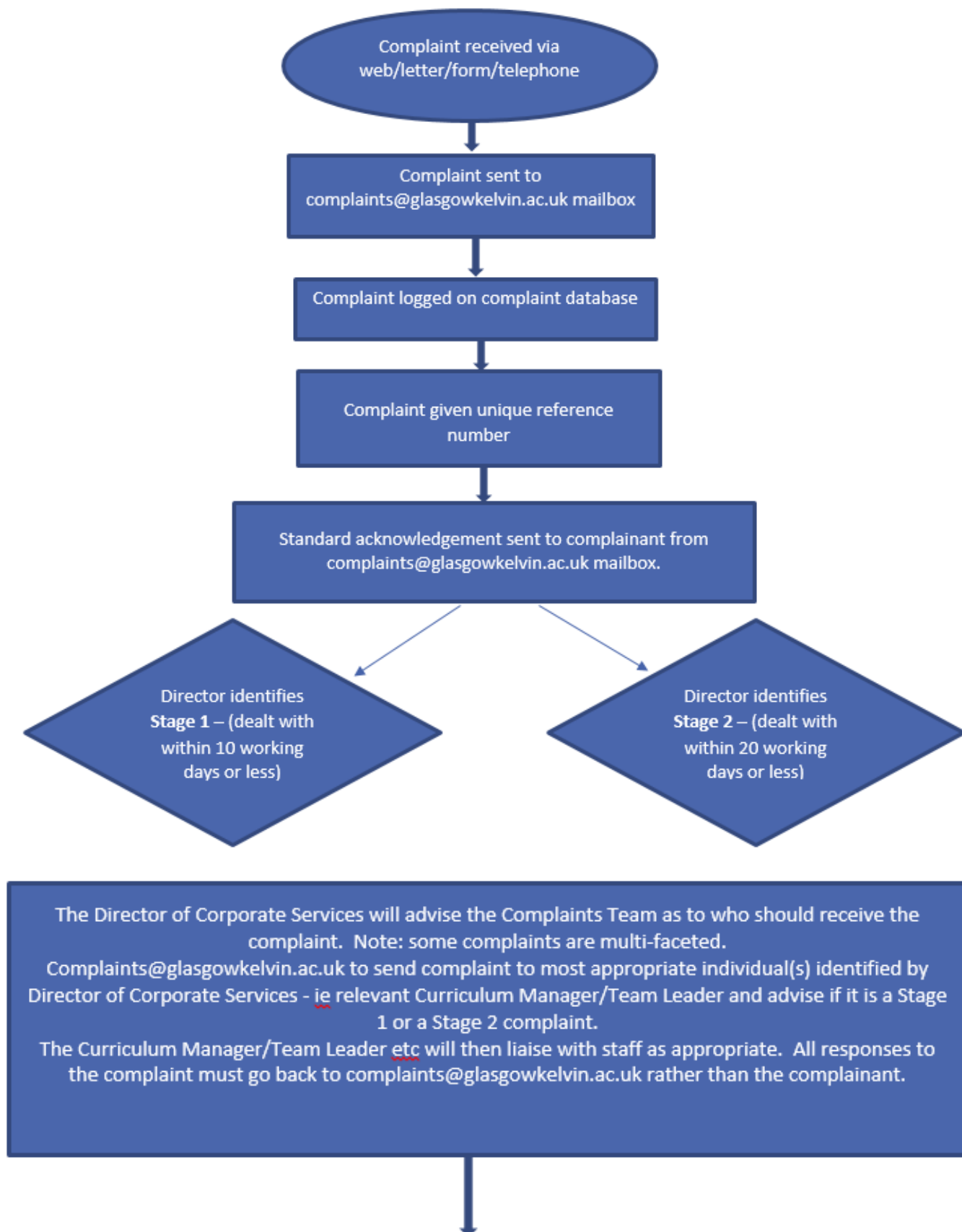
Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

| Learner Issue: Commendation & Complaint Procedure | Class Issues Highlighted by Learners: |
|---|---|
| <p>The Learner reports (verbal or policy form) issues to their 'Guidance Tutor' in the first instance, who then contacts the 'Class Tutor' as soon as possible (in many cases the Guidance and Class tutor may be the same person)</p> <p>The 'Class Tutor' with assistance from their CM (if required) should deal with the learner issue within 5 working days of being informed, as per guidance extracted from 'Commendation and Complaints policy' (if appropriate).</p> <p>In the majority of cases the Class Tutor and/or CM will be able to resolve or deal with any matters. However, if this is not the case, the matter needs to escalate to the SCM to investigate as per the procedure.</p> <p>The Learner at this point has the option of informing the Students Association of their issues, if they so wish</p> <p>The SCM will action a solution and communicate the advised outcome with the Learner to resolve the issue. Simultaneously, the Head of Faculty will be notified.</p> <p>If still unresolved and a dispute arises, only at this point should the Principal's PA be contacted by the Student Association.</p> | <p>Depending on the urgency/category of the issue: The Class Tutor decides which policy category route to follow i.e., Safeguarding, Commendation, Complaint etc.</p> <p>The 'Class Tutor' should be aware of the College's 'Protection Team' in relation to the Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>Complaint examples: Failure to provide a service/inadequate quality or standard of service/behaviour</p> |

Complaints Handling Process



Director of Corporate Services will generate a response letter, incorporating all relevant College staff response(s).

Advice on how to appeal to the College Principal is included.

Response letter to be shared with Head of Faculty/College Manager to ensure appropriateness and completeness.

Response logged in complaints database

Appeals made to the Principal will require the next level of individual to review file ie Senior Curriculum Manager/College Manager etc. and prepare a report accordingly.

Principal to prepare final response to any appeal received.
The complainant has no other recourse within the College; the next stage is to the SPSO.

If complainants are still unsatisfied with the College response, then they can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities. Contact details are as follows:

- Freephone advice line 0800 377 7330
- Online: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
- In person 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS ([see a map](#))
- By post Freepost SPSO (this is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need to use a stamp)
- Fax 0800 377 7331

Appendix 2

Complaints Forum Group

| Member | Job Title |
|-------------------------|--|
| Lisa Clark (Chair) | Director of Corporate Services |
| Anne Wood | Quality Enhancement Manager |
| Patricia Currie | Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Manager |
| Lesley Lang | Communications and Planning Manager |
| Arlene Sweeney | Learner Engagement Officer |
| David McDade | Senior Curriculum Manager |
| Chris Greenshields | Guidance and Admissions Coordinator |
| Carlyn McNab | Director of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement |
| Donald Higgins - Durnan | Team Leader – Administration |
| Tracy Leavy | Senior Curriculum Manager |
| Monica McKerlie | Head of Service to Support Learners |
| Val Robertson | Senior Curriculum Manager |
| Peter Brown | Senior Curriculum Manager |
| Annette McKenna | PA to Principal |
| Carol Goodwin | Lecturer |