



Complaints Handling Report

Quarter 3 - Academic Year 2019-20

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Introduction

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is committed to ensuring all clients and customers receive the best possible service. The College monitors stakeholder complaint feedback and ensures any lessons learned are actioned to improve its services. Reports measuring the College's complaints handling performance will be published online quarterly and issued to the Senior Executive Team.

NESCol complaints handling procedures are subject to regular review and alteration as required. This could be as a result of stakeholder experiences, internal changes or external initiatives. The College is a member of the sector Complaints Handling Advisory Group, operating with the College Development Network (CDN) and in association with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO).

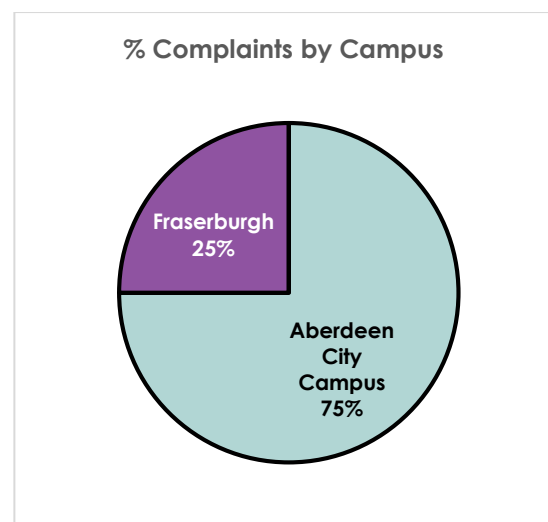
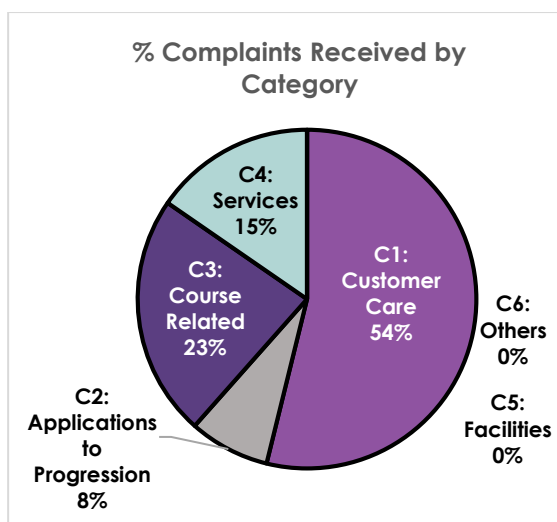
NESCol is an equal opportunities College therefore all complaints are administered in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Quarterly Trends

For this quarter, NESCol received 8 complaints. The majority of complaints made relate to a college course (C3) or customer care (C1). Common themes regarding the cause of complaints are:

- Staff conduct
- Transportation issues
- Learning and teaching on a course

The pie chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints received for each complaint category. The pie chart to the right shows a breakdown of the percentage of complaints received this quarter for each campus. The Aberdeen City (6) and Fraserburgh (2) campuses received all the Q3 complaints. This corresponds with the higher student populations attending courses at these sites.



Impact on Service Delivery

Upon closing a complaint, the quality team request details of any lessons learned or actions for completion (where applicable) from the relevant departments. The feedback received from stakeholders through the complaints process can alter our service delivery and highlight areas for improvement in order to better our practices. The below example/s from this quarter highlights the value of stakeholder feedback.

Complaint regarding the parking procedure at the Aberdeen City Campus, associated information provided to students and the complaints procedure.

A student submitted a complaint in relation to their denial of access to the campus car park, which was followed by misinformation about how they could complain about their experience.

The Head of Health, Safety and Security provided clarity on the guidance relating to student parking restrictions at the campus and has updated security personnel on the most effective way of dealing with students who are not clear on these.

The Head of Student Access and Information has acknowledged that the information provided in relation to the complaints process was incorrect. In response to this complaint, there is now a supply of complaints forms at the reception and staff have been reminded that complaints are not exclusively logged online.

Complaint regarding the quality of a course provided by the college.

A complaint was submitted by a student who was dissatisfied with their course. The Director of Learning ensured that an experienced member of staff was made available to teach an extended version of the course for the entire cohort. In addition, the relevant team will improve upon the monitoring of class feedback and progress on non-certified courses.

Complaint regarding the application and interview process.

A complaint was submitted by an applicant for a course who was dissatisfied with their application and interview experience. The complaint was dealt with over the phone and re-opened when the complainant expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of written response to all aspects of the complaint. Staff have been advised that, when dealing with a complaint response verbally, they should explain to the complainant that they will not automatically receive a written response as per our procedure, unless the member of staff dealing with the complaint has agreed to provide this. By issuing this guidance, it should prevent any potential future confusion with regards to a complaint being closed.

Further Education Complaints Performance Indicators – Definitions

The following definitions for stage 1, stage 2, and escalated should be consistently applied throughout all indicators.

Stage 1

This means those responded to at stage 1 (frontline resolution). This does not include those escalated from stage 1 to stage 2. These will be counted in the escalated complaints. This includes those where the extended timeline (i.e. + additional 5 working days) was used.

Stage 2

This means those responded to at stage 2 (investigation). This includes those where the extended timeline (i.e. + additional 20 working days) was used.

This refers to those complaints considered directly at stage 2 for the following reasons:

- * straight away by complainant (this refers to customers who did not wish to be dealt with at stage 1 and wished to go straight to stage 2)
- * straight away by the College, or within a day or so after due consideration (i.e. College recognised complex, serious, high risk nature of the complaint and felt it was not suitable to be considered at stage 1)

Escalated

This means those escalated from stage 1 to stage 2.

This refers to those complaints where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the frontline resolution and have requested that their case be escalated to stage 2 for investigation.

This includes those complaints where escalation was required because frontline resolution timescales were not met (i.e. 11 working days or more). Therefore automatic escalation rules apply.

Population

This figure will represent the total student population. For example the number of matriculated students at an agreed date.

The College, when reporting on the complaints handling KPIs for each quarter, adheres to the above definitions to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Complaints Handling Key Performance Indicators – Quarter 3

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS		Q3	
Total no. of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population		No.	%
Number of complaints Received		8	100.0%
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population		12857	0.1
Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed		No.	%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed		6	75.0%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed		0	0.0%
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed		1	12.5%
Open		1*	12.5%
Number of complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage and as a % of complaints closed at that stage			
Stage 1		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1		3	50.0%
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1		2	33.3%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1		1	16.7%
Stage 2*		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	0.0%
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	0.0%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	0.0%
Escalated		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation		1**	100.0%
Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation		0	0.0%
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation		0	0.0%
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage		Total	Average
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1		37	6.2
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2		0	0
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation		17	17
Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales (S1=5 workings days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)		No.	%
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days		3	50.0%
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days		3	50.0%
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		0	0.0%
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0.0%
No. and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		1	100.0%
No. and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0.0%

* One complaint at stage two remains open. A meeting is required between the complainants and the investigating director. Due to Covid-19 and the closure of college campuses, this meeting has had to be postponed. Director is in contact with complainants and the meeting will be rearranged ASAP. The complaint cannot be closed without a meeting.

** There were three parts to this specific complaint - two were upheld and one was partially upheld.

Escalation and Extension Rationale

There were three extensions applied to frontline complaints this quarter. In each instance, the member of staff responsible for investigating the complaint required more time to meet with complainants face to face, or to summarise the content and conclusion of telephone conversations in a follow-up email.

In this quarter there was one complaint that was escalated from a frontline complaint to an investigation. The complaint was originally dealt with over the phone by the two relevant Directors. This was re-opened following a discussion between the complainant and the Director of Quality. The escalated complaint required the composition of a written response compiled by all parties involved.

Complaints Handling Feedback Questionnaire

Following the receipt of a response to their complaint, complainants are sent a complaints handling questionnaire so they can indicate their satisfaction with the different components of the complaints process.

This is monitored on a regular basis and the quality team review feedback received in relation to the handling process. This can influence future practice and alterations to the procedure followed.