



Complaints Handling Report

Quarter 2 (November - January)

Academic Year AY2021-22

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1. 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 Leadership 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).

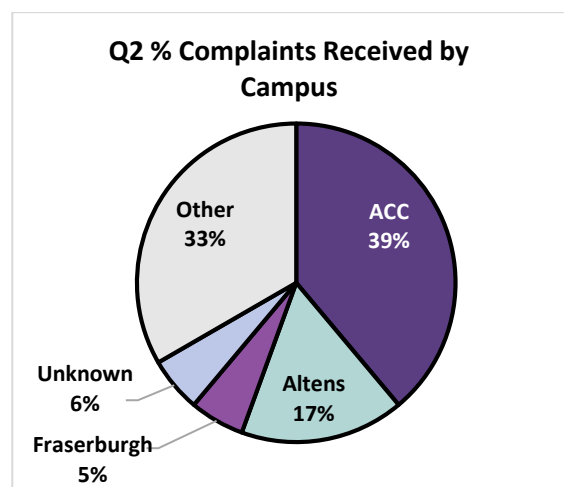
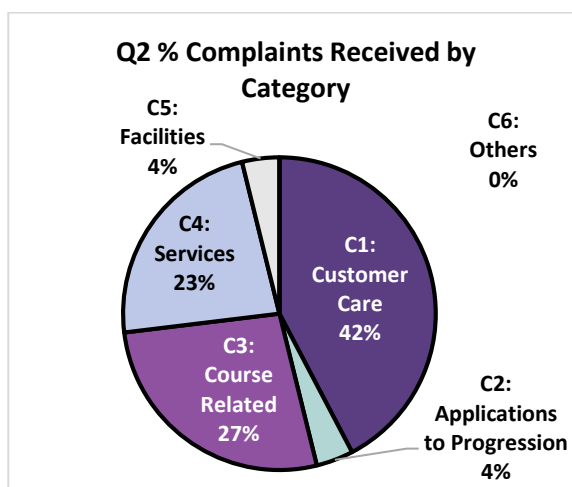
NESCol is an equal opportunities College therefore all complaints are administered in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

2. Quarterly Trends

For this quarter, NESCol received 18 complaints. The majority of complaints made are Course Related (C3), linked to Customer Care (C1) and college Services (C4). Common themes regarding the cause of complaints are:

- Staff conduct
- Diversity and equality
- Learning and teaching
- Funding

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. Complaints received this quarter, Aberdeen City (7), Fraserburgh (1) and Altens (7). In addition, 6 complaints were raised in relation to Other college locations and the location of 1 complaint is Unknown.



3. 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.

Improving communication around student withdrawal.

A complaint was received following the withdrawal of a student. The student was unaware that they were withdrawn and that they had not been on track for success. It was highlighted to the curriculum team the importance of logging discussions around progress and success with class groups. To ensure all students understand their progress towards achieving their award, all relevant staff have been reminded that regular feedback sessions must happen with all students. If a student does not respond, a progress update should be issued via email to ensure clear communication.

Improving communication and the quality of teaching on a course.

A complaint was received regarding the teaching, organisation and communication of one course. The teaching team discussed the professional standards, expectations and actions to deliver the best experience for the students. In response, the Curriculum Manager has taken the lead on organising the course and is regularly meeting with the teaching team and students. The opportunities to discuss the course regularly will allow for the progress of the actions to be monitored to best support the cohort.

Improving the college response to adverse weather conditions.

A complaint was received regarding a perceived delay in responding to adverse weather conditions. Since the logging of the complaint, the college has undertaken a review of the Severe Weather Conditions procedure. The key findings will be shared with the complainant to offer assurance for any future occasions where college-run travel amendments are required.

4. 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.

5. Complaints Handling Key Performance Indicators

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS		Q2	
Total no. of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population		No.	%
Number of complaints Received		18	100
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population		11822	0.2
No. 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		15	83.3
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed		1	5.6
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed		1	5.6
Open		1	5.6
No. 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		2	13.3
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1		8	53.3
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1		4	26.6
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1		1	6.7
Stage 2		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	0
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		1	100
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	0
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 2		0	0
Escalated		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation		1	100
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage Escalation		0	0
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage		No.	Av.
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1		64	4.3
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2		20	20
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation		14	14
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		13	86.7
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days		2	13.3
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		1	100
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		1	100
No. and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0
Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised		No.	%
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)		2	100
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0

6. Escalation and Extension Rationale

In this quarter, one complaint escalated to stage 2. This complaint was originally responded to as a stage 1 complaint. As per SPSO procedure the complainant is given the option to reopen their complaint at stage 2, which on this occasion was requested and an investigation was completed.

In this quarter, two frontline complaints were granted an extension. Both complaints required the additional time to investigate fully and to accommodate the availability of relevant staff.

The open stage 2 complaint for this quarter has been granted an extension in order to fully address the data protection aspect which accompanies the complaint.

7. 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.