



Complaints Handling Report

Quarter 1 (August – October)

Academic Year 2023-24

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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).

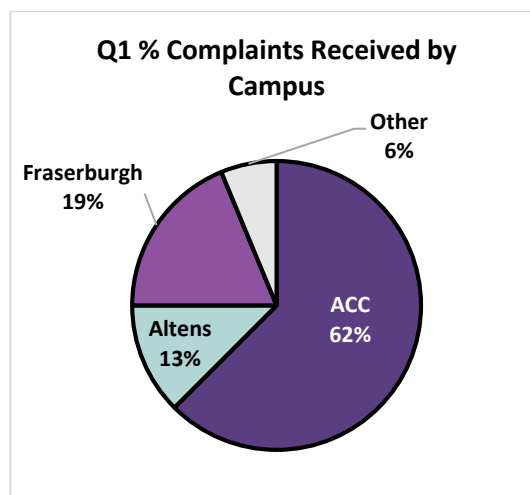
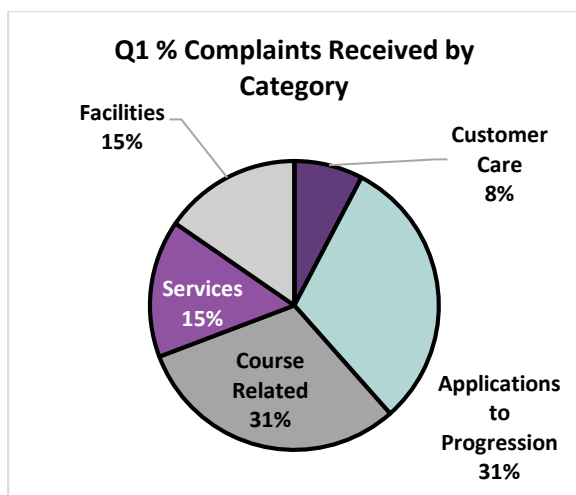
NESCol is an equal opportunities College therefore all complaints are administered in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

2. Quarterly Trends

For this quarter, NESCol received 16 complaints. The majority of complaints made are Customer Care Related (C1), Course Related (C3), Application to Progression (C2), Facilities (C5) and College Services (C4). Common themes regarding the cause of complaints are:

- Data Protection
- Diversity & Equality
- Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal

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. Of the complaints received this quarter, Aberdeen City received 10, Fraserburgh received 3, Altens received 2 and 1 complaint was raised in relation to 'other' college locations.



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 College Wi-Fi for Students

A complaint was received regarding the college Wi-Fi being slow which impacts student classwork. Through the Lessons Learned it was confirmed that ITTS were already aware of an intermittent issue with the new Wi-Fi solution and this was being actively addressed. It was confirmed that a thorough assessment of the Wi-Fi network with the college support partner is taking place to identify the issue. Changes will be made to improve the signal strength and stability of the Wi-Fi connection and ITTS will continue to monitor the Wi-Fi performance to ensure consistent connectivity in the future.

Improving Staff Awareness and Understanding

A complaint was received in relation to the way the curriculum team were dealing with student additional needs. The complaints handler was able to identify training that will be required to be undertaken by all NESCol staff and a plan put in place to roll this out starting 2023/24. This will allow staff to have an awareness and understanding to allow students who have these needs to be able to have the support and compassion they require.

Improving Resulting Process for Students

Two complaints were received that related to the resulting of students not being entered into the correct system meaning students were informed incorrectly that they had not passed courses that had previously been communicated they had passed. From these complaints it has highlighted the importance of being vigilant around reporting of students work. It was highlighted that regular team meetings with resulting on the agenda were vitally important to ensure this doesn't happen again.

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		Q1	
Total no. of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population		No.	%
Number of complaints Received		16	100
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population		11846	0.1
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	93.7
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed		1	6.2
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed		0	0
Open		0	0
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		9	64.3
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1		3	14.3
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1		3	21.4
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1		0	0
Stage 2		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2		1	100
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	0
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		0	0
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		70	4.7
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2		17	17
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation		N/A	N/A
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	13.8
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		0	0
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)		0	0
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, no complaints escalated to stage 2.

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

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.