
Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Comments Procedure

Parent policy:	Quality
Purpose:	<p>To provide an effective means of enabling learners, citizens, their relatives or advocates, and outside agencies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• raise a concern or make a complaint• make comments or make a compliment about any aspect of the College's services.
Procedures:	Safeguarding for adults: Safeguarding for children
Accountabilities:	Deputy Principal Quality and Further Education; Quality Improvement Manager; Data Manager
Target audience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primarily for learners, citizens, parents, carers, advocates and employers• Staff can also use this procedure, but only Stage 1.
Content linkage:	<p>Safeguarding Policy Whistleblowing Policy Care Manual Learning and Teaching Manual Learner and Citizen Handbooks</p>
Monitoring and Review cycle:	<p>The procedure is monitored by annual statistical reports to the Senior Management Team and the Governing Body Oversight and Standards Group and termly to the Quality Committee.</p> <p>The procedure is reviewed annually in July.</p>

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Introduction

Our aim is to ensure that any concerns and complaints that are raised are investigated effectively and promptly. We will:

- seek to resolve concerns and complaints at an early stage as far as possible and where this is not possible to provide opportunity for concerns and complaints to be addressed proportionately
- give complainants a clear response to their concern or complaint, within the time limits given in the procedure (Annex A)
- monitor concerns and complaints to ensure ongoing service development
- welcome comments and compliments about the services provided at the College.

Feedback to the College can be in the form of:

- Learner Led Conversations which are carried out between Progression Tutors and learners
- Comment cards which can be found in the Coffee Shop, Reception and in the Care Department
- Parent/Carer surveys which are sent out twice yearly
- Parent forums which are held in education half termly
- Visitor Record Books which are stored on Main Reception
- Telephone calls which can be taken by anyone (but which will be put through to the relevant manager).

Records

All concerns and complaints will be recorded using the Concerns and Complaints Recording Form (see example in Annex C), along with the College outcomes and other relevant documents will be held with the relevant managers:

- Quality Improvement Manager
- Data Manager

Records of all concerns and complaints will be open to internal and external inspection as required. As part of the investigation the person investigating the complaint may read any relevant information on the learner's/ citizen's records.

Comments and compliment postcards can be found in various places around College and are collected in collection boxes on reception areas. The Quality Administrator for

Education collates comments and compliments that are received from visitors, parents or carers and stakeholders that come into contact with the College.

Complaints statistics

The Data Manager and Quality Improvement Manager will compile statistics, at least annually, about concerns and complaints for the Senior Management, including:

- the number of concerns and complaints
- the category of concern or complaint, for example care, catering, teaching
- the outcome of concerns and complaints and any action taken
- profile of concerns and complaints by protected characteristic.

Related documents

None

Annexes

A; B; C; D follow

Annex A – Guidance and Process for Raising a Concern or Complaint

Did we get it right?

The College is committed to high standards of service. We want to hear from you if things didn't work out well or if you have a concern. Although we try hard, we don't always get things right so it is important that you talk to us.

Please discuss initially with a member of staff. They will try to correct the problem, or ask another member of staff to help you to solve the problem. We hope that most problems can be dealt with quickly in this way.

Because we encourage an informal approach in the first instance this does not mean that we are not taking your concerns seriously. In our experience it is always best to talk face to face and we will always attempt to meet with you if possible. Having your views helps us to ensure that we continue to improve our services to understand what you want and expect.

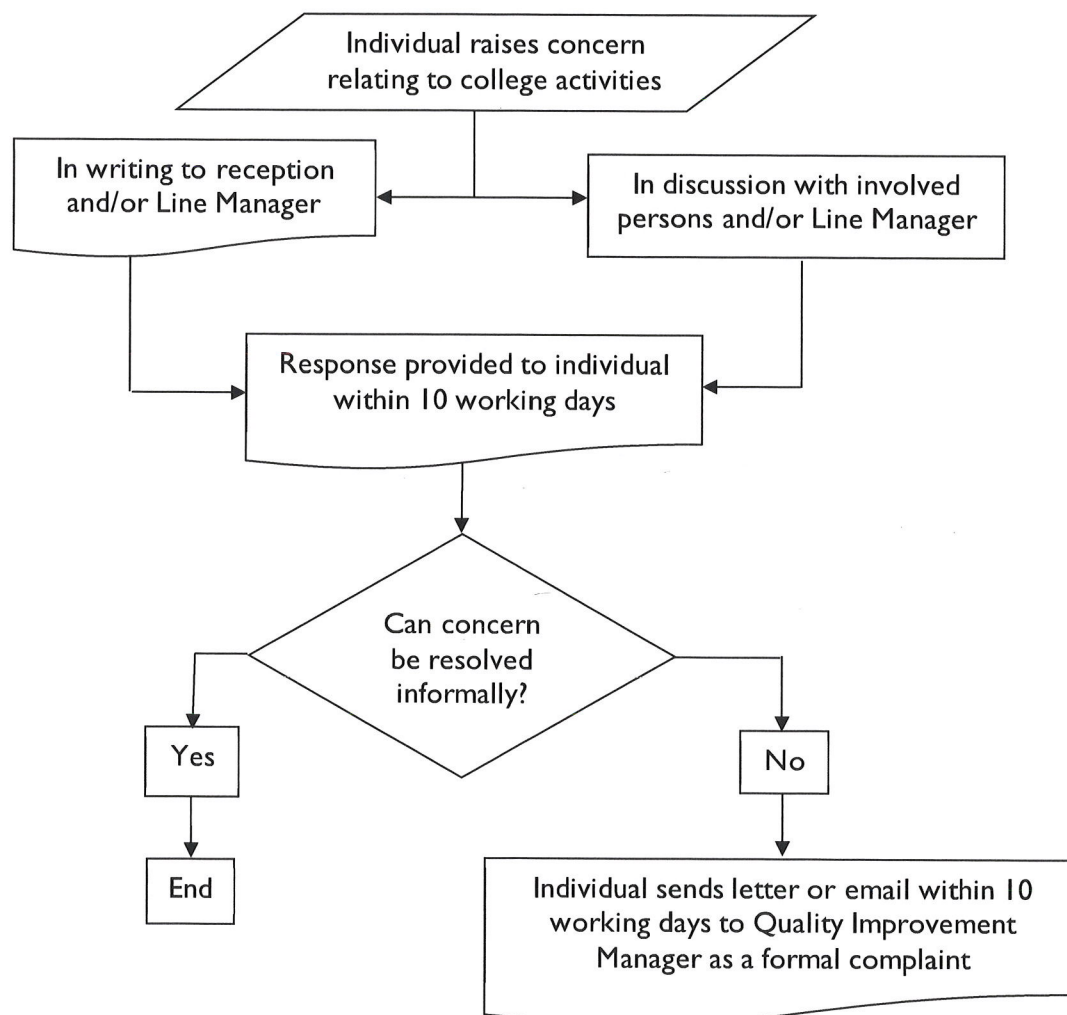
What to do if you need help to make a complaint

A friend, relative, professional person and/or our Information, Advice, Guidance and Transition (IAGT) Team may be able to support you in making a complaint and they can also come with you to your meeting with staff.

Where concerns are being raised or a complaint being made by on behalf of a learner/citizen the College will work with the parent/carer to establish consent with the learner to pursue the concern or complaint.

A process map of the stages involved in a concern, complaint or compliment being raised follows:

Stage 1: Concern/Informal Stage



Stage 1 - Concern/Informal Stage – *Please talk to us*

This stage deals with concerns made by you about issues of a day-to-day nature, which can usually be resolved relatively simply and swiftly.

If you have a concern then please talk to the person who is working with you or their supervisor/line manager so that we can get things sorted out as quickly as possible. If you are off-site you can phone if that is easier.

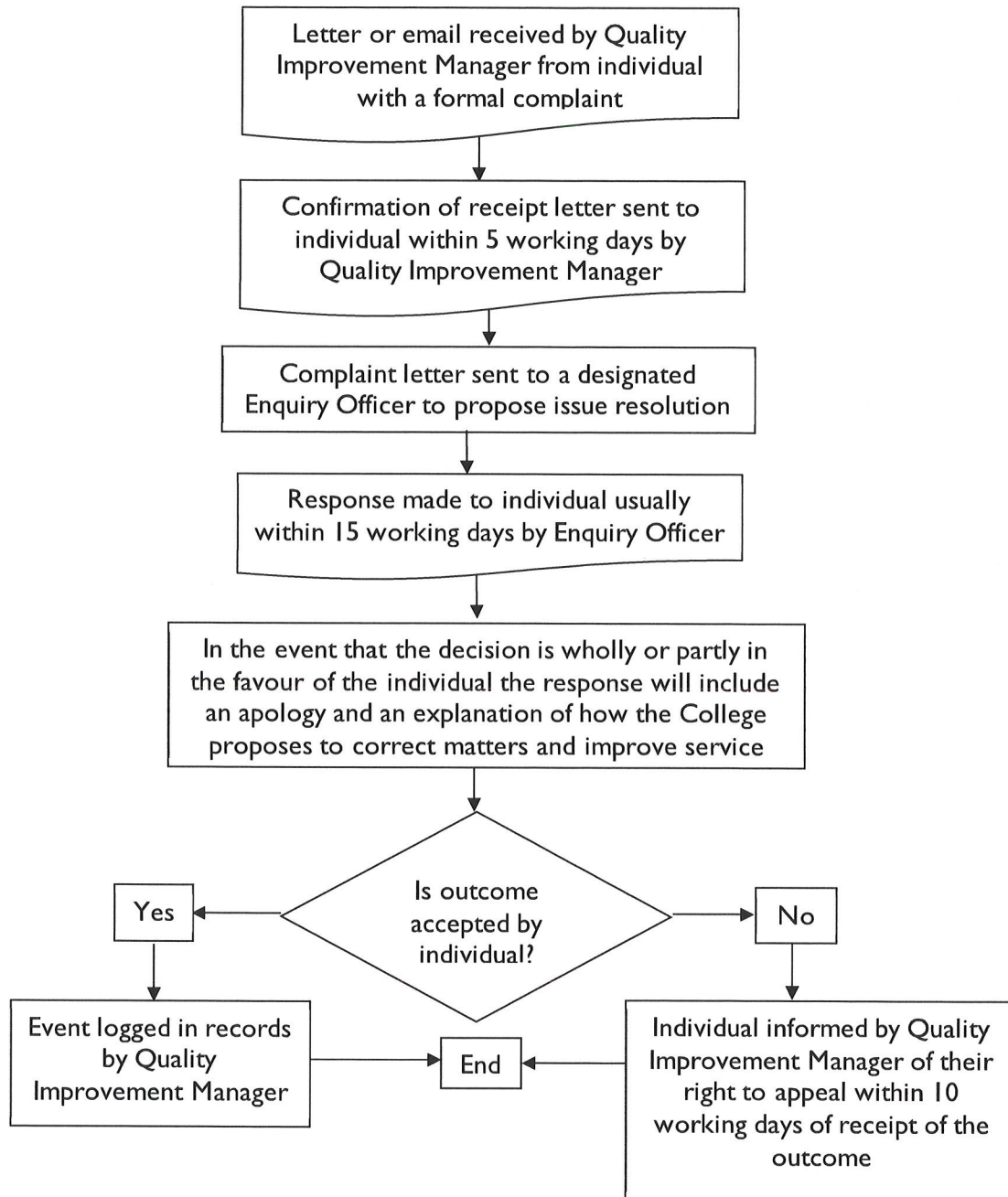
If you prefer, you may also write to us. You can post your letter or hand it into Reception. If you write to us we will get back to you within 5 working days.

If you would like someone to help you explain the concern please tell the staff member you are talking to. We may decide that it would help us sort out any problems by discussing them with you or getting everyone concerned together.

For all concerns we hope to have them resolved within a further 10 working days after we have received your concern. If it is going to take longer to look into the matter you have raised we will tell you when you can expect to hear from us again.

In most cases you will be sent a letter, or an e mail if you prefer, with our outcome reminding you of the problem or what your concern was about and how we have tried to put things right for you. You will be advised of Stage 2 within the response if you feel the matter has not been sorted out properly.

Stage 2: Complaint/Formal Stage



Stage 2 - Complaint/Formal Stage – *Are you not satisfied with our first response?*

If you are unhappy with the way things have been dealt with, or our response, you can raise the concern again more formally, as a complaint, within 10 working days of the receipt of our outcome. This must be in writing or via email and sent to the Quality Improvement Manager.

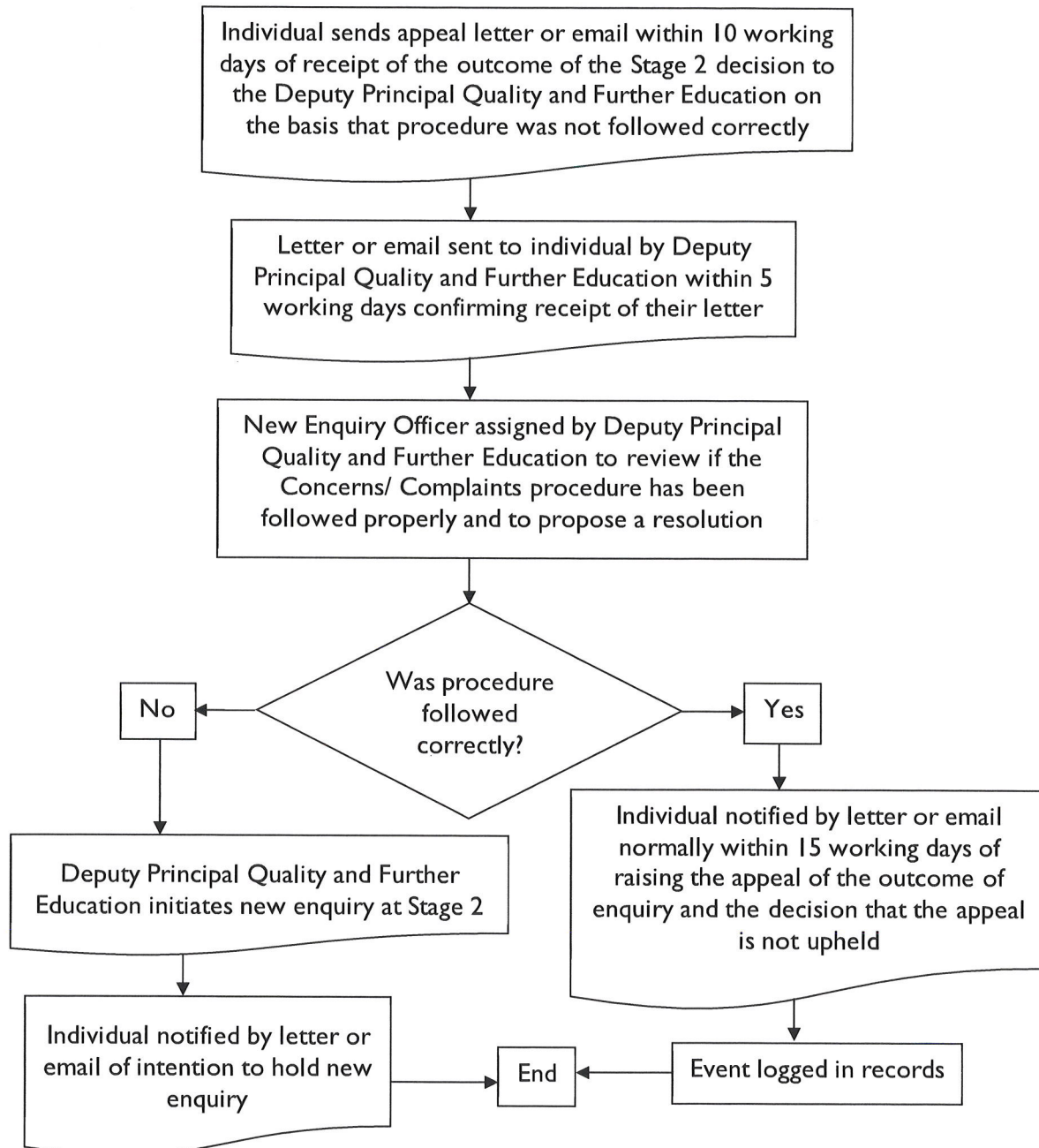
The Quality Improvement Manager will decide how the matter should be looked into but your complaint would normally be passed to an appropriate Enquiry Officer to try to sort things out. Again, we will let you know we have received your letter within 5 working days and what we intend to do next.

Even if we have not been able to clear up problems before we would very much hope that things are resolved at this stage. The complaint will usually be dealt with by an impartial member of staff.

You will normally be advised of the outcome from the Enquiry Officer as soon as we can and usually within 15 working days of our acknowledgement; sooner if possible. If the matter requires further time you will be kept informed of progress and the estimated date of completion.

In cases where the decision is wholly or partly in your favour the letter will include an apology and an explanation of how the College proposes to correct matters and improve our service. Before moving to Stage 3, if you feel that there remains evidence, that has been presented which has not been taken into account sufficiently, you have the opportunity to raise further questions within 10 working days. You will also be advised that you have the option to appeal and move to Stage 3 if you feel the **procedure** has not been followed correctly.

Stage 3: Appeal



Stage 3 – Appeal – *Are you unhappy that the procedure has not been followed correctly?*

If things are not resolved at Stage 2 then you have the right to appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome. **The appeal can only be on the grounds that this procedure was not followed correctly.** Appeals must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal Quality and Further Education here at Portland.

We will let you know we have received your appeal within 5 working days. The Deputy Principal Quality and Further Education will assign a different Enquiry Officer to review if the Concerns/Complaints Procedure has or has not been followed properly.

If it is decided that the Procedure has not been followed correctly a new enquiry will commence at Stage 2 and you will be informed of this. If it is decided that the Procedure has been followed then this will be communicated with you. There is no further right of appeal.

The outcome of the appeal will be sent in writing to you within 15 days of our acknowledgement of your appeal. If this deadline cannot be met you will be advised of the reasons for the delay and an estimate of when you should expect a response.

General

We will use concerns and complaints to improve how we work and the services we offer. There is regular reporting to the Senior Management Team to review themes and organisational learning from concerns and complaints.

Although we would like to have the opportunity to resolve your concern first, if you are unable to resolve your difficulties through this Procedure, or you do not want to approach College staff, there are a range of central and local government agencies that inspect and regulate the work of the College, including Ashfield District Council, the Care Quality Commission, Charities Commission, Education and Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted. In many circumstances external agencies will advise the complainant to use College procedures before embarking with their own investigation. Not all these agencies deal directly with complaints from individuals but they may be able to advise you who can help.

Frivolous and/or Vexatious Complaints

The College reserves the right at any point in the Concerns and Complaints process to discharge any complaint or concern which on the balance of probability and evidence available at the time of your concern or complaint being raised appears to be false, misleading or untrue. You can at any time take your complaint to an external agency and the College will liaise with the appropriate agency to deal with any concern or complaint it receives.

We do not have to investigate complaints for a second time if there does not appear to be reasonable grounds and the purpose appears to be to cause annoyance or inconvenience. We will investigate a second time if there is new information.

Compliments

Getting in touch with us does not have to be about raising concerns or complaining. Please let us know if you have suggestions to improve our services or if you want to thank someone as well.

What is a comment?

We strive to capture learner/citizen views through various mediums. Comments can be identified through Learner Led Conversations, Comment cards, Parent/Carer Surveys, Parent Forum and Visitor Record Books. A comment can be a general statement about anything – it could be about policies, procedures or the service we provide as a whole. It can be positive or negative in nature.

What is a compliment?

A compliment is an expression of praise. It is a positive statement from a learner/citizen, their relatives/representatives or anyone that comes into contact with us. A compliment could be communicated orally or in a written form, such as a formal letter, email or thank you/comment card.

Annex B: General Guidance to Staff

Concerns and complaints should not be viewed negatively, but as an opportunity to review and improve services. Staff should therefore encourage learners or citizens to make their views known.

Remember your first response to a concern or complaint will have critical impact on the final outcome.

We aim to create an atmosphere where learner/citizens, their relatives or representatives should:

- be encouraged to feel that complaints, concerns, compliments, comments and suggestions are all welcome
- know that they have a right to express a concern or make a complaint and that it will be taken seriously and treated with respect
- believe that complaints and concerns will lead to positive action and that change and improvements will take place as a result
- be able to raise a concern or make a complaint or in a straightforward way to an easily accessible staff member.

What is a concern?

We seek to encourage learner/citizens, their relatives or representatives to express any issues connected with the College which are of concern directly to staff. At Stage 1 of the process the person expressing their concern might use the term “complain” or “complaint” but staff should still seek an informal resolution perhaps by giving better or more timely information or by a simple operational response.

What is a complaint?

If a concern cannot be resolved at Stage 1 it can progress to Stage 2 as a complaint. A concern or complaint could be about:

- care received
- quality of education/training
- the environment and facilities, including food service
- the actions of a specific staff member
- the actions of another learner.

Suggestions for dealing with a complaint or concern:

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- listen, be courteous and calm
 - accept the person's right to complain or raise a concern
 - clarify exactly what the concern or complaint is and remember to record this on the Record Sheet (Annex C)
 - explain any relevant procedure and information to the person
 - explain what is, and what is not, in your power to do
 - explain exactly what you are going to do about the complaint or concern and whom you are going to inform
 - if you are not sure how to proceed, seek guidance from a more senior member of staff and inform the complainant that you are going to do this and then come back to them in a specified timeframe
 - explain that you will be recording the concern or complaint
 - be positive; try to resolve the concern or complaint if you can
 - always inform your manager about any complaints and concerns you receive, even if you resolve them
 - if the complaint or concern is about another staff member **always** seek guidance from your manager.

Things to avoid when dealing with a concern or complaint:

- do not take the complaint or concern personally
- do not let your response to the complaint or concerns become a further cause of complaint.

Is there a safeguarding issue?

When receiving either a verbal or written concern or complaint you must consider if this could be a safeguarding issue. If there is any indication that the complaint or concern may be a safeguarding issue then the staff member must immediately inform their line manager and follow the College Policy on Safeguarding Adults or Children. The respective manager will then contact the appropriate senior officer on call who will then advise on the external agencies who need to be contacted, in line with College policy to support any investigation into allegations of abuse.

Annex C – Concerns and Complaints Recording Form (3 pages) [example]

The form

Number	<input type="text"/>	FE	PF	Other	<input type="text"/>
Stage 1	<input type="text"/>	Stage 2	<input type="text"/>	Stage 3	<input type="text"/>

Name of Complainant	
Complaint or concern reported to:	
Confirm Complaints and Complaints Procedure Explained	Yes/No
Details of Complaint or Concern	

Concerns and Complaints Recording Form (2 of 3 pages)

Enquiry Carried out by					
Date Carried out					
Action – Outcome Taken					
Date of Response to Complainant					
By Whom					
Any other comments					
Complaint or concern substantiated			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Complaint or concern partially substantiated			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Complaint or concern not substantiated			<input type="checkbox"/>		
			[tick only one box]		
Name		Signed		Date	

Concerns and Complaints Recording Form (3 of 3 pages)

Ethnicity				
White		Black African		Bangladeshi
Black Caribbean		Black Other		Chinese
Indian		Pakistani		Other Nationality

Sex	
Male	
Female	

Age						
16-18	19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	64 +

Disability: (please state)

Religion or Belief: (please state)

Sexual Orientation:					
Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Heterosexual	Other (please specify)	Prefer not to say

Pregnant:		
Yes	No	N/A

Maternity/Paternity leave:	
Yes	No

Gender Identity:			
Do you present either full time or part time in a gender different to that which was assigned to you at birth?	Yes	No	Prefer not to say

Annex D: Agreed content for Learner and Citizen Handbooks, Learning and Teaching and Manual; Care Manual

Learner and Citizen Handbooks

Concerns, Complaints, Comments and Compliments

We want to hear from you if things didn't work out well or if you have a concern. Although we try hard, we don't always get things right so it is important that you talk to us.

We also like to hear from you when you in a less formal way through any comments you may wish to record and welcome compliments if you think they are deserved.

Care and Learning and Teaching Manuals

Concerns, Complaints, Comments and Compliments

The College procedure 'Concerns, Complaints, Comments and Compliments' is intended to ensure that we provide an effective means of enabling learners, citizens, their relatives or advocates, and outside agencies to raise a concern or make a complaint about any aspect of the College's service. We also encourage feedback on what we offer in the way of comments or compliments. The procedure can be found here: [\[insert link\]](#)