

Teitl: Polisi Adborth a Chwynion y Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid
Title: Customer Service Feedback & Complaints Policy

Dyddiad November 2018
Cyhoeddi:
Issue Date:



Adolygu a Chymeradwyo / Review and Approval

Cyfrifoldeb: Responsibility:	Higher Education Partnerships & Compliance Manager
Corff Cymeradwyo: Approval body:	SMT – December 2018 Governing Body – November 2018
Dyddiad Cymeradwyo: Approval date:	November 2018
Amllder Adolygu: Review Frequency:	3 years
Dyddiad Asesu'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb: Equality Impact Assessment Date:	November 2018
Dyddiad y Daw i Ben: Expiry Date:	October 2021

Cwmpas / Scope

Sicrhewch fod y polisi/strategaeth yn cynnwys datganiad cwmpas sydd yn nodi at bwy neu beth mae'r polisi yn berthnasol iddynt. Er enghraifft: pob gweithiwr, myfyriwr, system gyfrifiadurol, taliad cerdyn credyd. Please ensure that the policy/strategy includes a scope statement that specifies to who or what the policy applies. For example: all employees, all learners, all computer systems, all credit card payments.

*I'w bennu gan y Rheolwr Gweinyddol a Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid /
/ To be assigned by the Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager*

Cyfeirnod: *Ceir ei bennu wedi cymeradwyo'r ddogfen*
Reference: *This will be assigned to the document on approval*

Fersiwn:
Version:

Dosbarthiad: *Hynod Gyfrinachol / Cyfrinachol / Mewnol / Cyhoeddus*
Classification *Highly Confidential / Confidential / Internal / Public*

:

Coleg Cambria

**Customer Service
Feedback & Complaints Policy**

Version 3

Revised November 2018

Next review October 2021

Customer Service Feedback & Complaints Policy

Chief Executive's Welcome

We are committed to delivering excellent services in all that we do. We recognise the need to welcome and use positive feedback, but sometimes things can go wrong and you may be unhappy with the service you receive. When this happens we would like to know about it. This document describes our feedback and complaints policy and how to make a complaint.

Our policy reflects Coleg Cambria's commitment to valuing feedback and complaints from all of our customers. It is designed to try to resolve customer dissatisfaction quickly and as closely as possible to the point of service delivery, whilst also recognising areas of good practice.

Your feedback provides us with valuable information which we can use to improve customer satisfaction. Handled well, complaints can give our customers a straightforward way of raising concern, and can also help to improve our services.

The aim of this policy is to help us to do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance the college's reputation.

Your views are very important to us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the 'D'.

DAVID B JONES OBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Contents

Scope	5
Who can provide feedback or make a complaint?	5
Supporting the customer	5
Advice	5
Policy Overview	6
Learner Voice	7
Positive Feedback	7
What is a complaint?	7
Time limit for making complaints	8
Complaints involving more than one department or organisation	8
What if the Customer doesn't want to complain?	9
Withdrawn Complaints	9
Vexatious Complaints	9
Handling Anonymous Complaints	9
What To Do When An Issue Is Raised Or You Receive A Complaint	9
What exactly is the issue or complaint?	10
What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?	10
Stage 1 - Front Line Resolutions	10
What is a Front Line Resolution?	10
Can I achieve this, or explain why not?	10
Who can resolve a Front-Line Resolution?	10
If I can't resolve this, who can help with frontline resolution?	10
Extending the timescale of a Front Line Resolution	11
Closing the complaint at the front line resolution stage	11
Recording of front line resolutions	11
When to escalate to the investigation stage	11
Stage 2 – Investigation / Formal Complaints Process	12
Investigation	12
Who can resolve a complaint?	12
What to do when you receive a complaint for investigation	12
Timelines	13
Extension to the timeline	13
Mediation	13
Closing the complaint at the investigation stage	13
Stage 3 - Appeals	14
The right to appeal	14

Who to contact to Appeal	14
Receiving an Appeal	14
Invitation to an Appeal Meeting	14
Reasonable Adjustments	14
The Appeal Meeting	14
In Absentia	15
Appeal Outcome	15
Governance Of The Feedback And Complaints Handling Policy	15
Roles and Responsibilities	15
Chief Executive	15
Senior Postholders (SPHs)	15
Management Team	15
Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager	16
All College Staff	16
Feedback and Complaints Data	16
Recording complaints	16
Maintaining confidentiality	17
Reporting of feedback and complaints	17
Learning from complaints	17
Managing Unacceptable Behaviour	18
What Should I Do About Matters Of Public Interest / Serious Concerns	18
How Should I Complain About a Senior Post Holder (SPH)?	18
Complaints About Staff	18
Suggestions and Complaints About the Nursery, Kid's Club and Accommodation at Llety Llysfasi	19

Scope

This policy covers all aspects of college activity and is relevant to all customers and staff, not just those who would normally be responsible for receiving feedback and handling complaints within the college.

Who can provide feedback or make a complaint?

Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can provide feedback or make a complaint. Sometimes a customer may be unable or reluctant to provide feedback or to make a complaint on their own. We will accept feedback from third parties directly and complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

The college will support individuals or organisations wishing to provide feedback or complain about an aspect of its service. This is because we want to understand the nature of the complaint and how we might need to respond if a service is substandard or failing. This may include outside support, e.g. advocacy services, to help the customer.

Supporting the customer

Everyone has an equal right of access to our Policy. Customers who do not have English as a first language may need help with interpretation and translation services. Others may have specific needs that we will seek to meet to ensure easy access to the policy.

We must always take into account our commitment and responsibility to equality. Where appropriate, this includes making reasonable adjustments to our service to help the customer.

Several support and advocacy groups are available to support customers in pursuing a complaint. You should tell customers about them if need be.

Complaints brought forward in Welsh, or any other language including sign language, will be treated no less favourably than those brought to us in English.

Advice

For advice on any aspect of the policy, please contact:

Donna Pritchard

Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager

Coleg Cambria

Grove Park Road

Wrexham

LL12 7AB

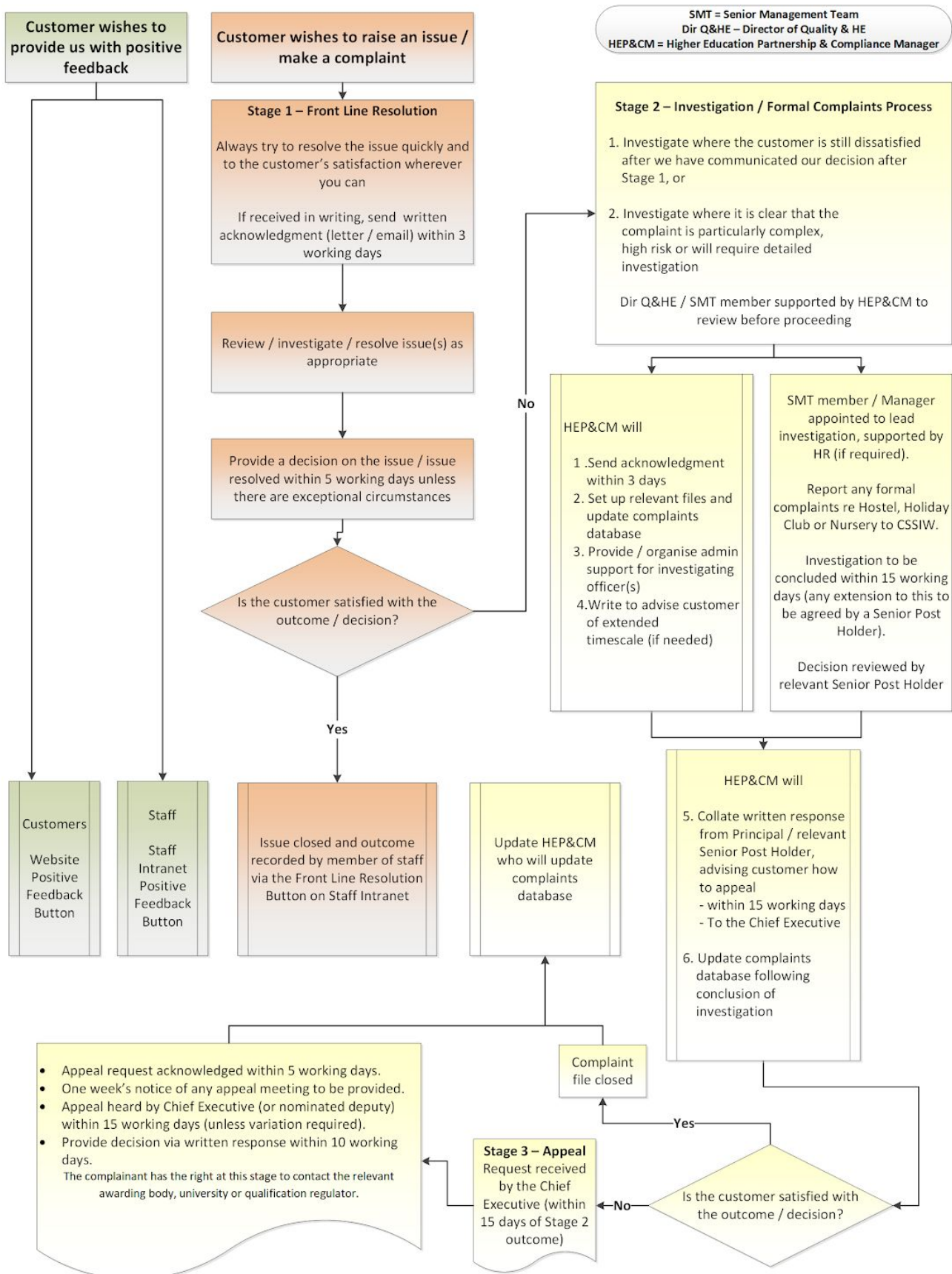


01978 267716



donna.pritchard@cambria.ac.uk

Customer Service Feedback & Complaints Process



Learner Voice

We are committed to providing a high quality experience to all learners. We encourage learners to pass on positive feedback, raise any aspects of concern or need to improve. Some examples of how we achieve this are below;

- Learning walks
- Learner voice meetings
- Learner surveys
- Tutorials
- Learner representation on management committees e.g. Equality & Diversity Committee
- Student Voice
- Course Team meetings
- Campus Council
- Big Class Rep Meetings
- Work Based Learning Forums

These are used as mechanisms to provide feedback to learners on the issues raised. The timeliness of these meetings and opportunities for feedback as per the Student Voice Constitution and are recorded in the relevant group's notes which are available to students.

Positive Feedback

In addition to issues and complaints we also record positive feedback from our customers. Customers taking the time to provide us with positive feedback is appreciated, allowing us to showcase and share good practice across the college.

Customers may, for example, wish to highlight where a service has exceeded their expectations or to recognise the work of individual members of staff or departments. Customers can record positive feedback via our website – www.cambria.ac.uk.

Staff can also record positive feedback received from customers via the Staff Intranet.

Positive feedback is reported on termly to our Senior Management Team and annually to our Governing Body.

Please refer to the diagram on page 2 for guidance.

What is a complaint?

Coleg Cambria's definition of a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about the college's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the college or on its behalf'.

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- A failure to provide a service
- The admissions process
- A request for a service or for information which has not been actioned or answered
- Wrong information about academic programmes or college services
- Accessibility of our buildings or services
- A learner's behaviour
- Disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another policy to resolve the matter
- Our policies
- Inadequate quality or standards of service
- The disciplinary process
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor
- The quality and availability of facilities and learning resources

- The behaviour of a members of staff or contractor
- Our failure to follow the proper administrative process
- How your personal data is processed
- How a request to exercise your individual rights under data protection legislation has been handled

A complaint is not:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- A request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- A disagreement with an academic judgement
- A claim for compensation from the college
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- A disagreement with a decision where a right of appeal exists
- A request for information under the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information Act
- A grievance by a member of staff
- An attempt to have us reopen or reconsider a complaint we have concluded or given our final decision on.

You should not treat these issues as complaints. Instead you should direct customers to use the right college procedures / policy.

Time limit for making complaints

The customer has six months to put their complaint to us, starting from when they first knew of the problem. For us to accept a complaint outside this time, there has to be special circumstances. We will use discretion when applying this time limit.

If it is clear that a decision not to investigate a customer's complaint will lead to a request for external review of the matter, we may decide that this satisfies the special circumstances criterion. This will enable us to consider the complaint and try to resolve it.

Complaints involving more than one department or organisation

If a complaint relates to the actions of two or more college departments, you must;

- Tell the customer who will take the lead in dealing with the complaint, and
- Explain that they will get only one response covering all issues raised.

If a customer complains to the college about the service of another body, but the college is not involved in the issue, you should advise the customer to contact the other body directly.

If the complaint directly relates to a college service and the service of another body, however, you must handle the complaint through this policy. The other body could be, for example, a school or contractor providing a service on the college's behalf, a qualifications' awarding body or the provider of catering and cleaning services. If you need to make enquiries to an outside body about the complaint, always take account of Data Protection Legislation and the guidance on handling our customers' personal information. The Information Commissioner has detailed guidance on data sharing and has issued a data-sharing code of practice.

These 'joint-service' complaints may be about such things as:

- Property maintenance, where the customer's dissatisfaction relates to our service and that of an external facilities body

- Accommodation not directly under our ownership
- Third-party services, for example, IT systems
- EMA / ALG payments

What if the Customer doesn't want to complain?

All feedback received which meets our definition of a complaint will be recorded as a complaint. We should encourage customers to submit their complaint to allow us to deal with it according to our policy and to allow us to improve our services. It will ensure they are updated on the action taken and that they receive a timely response to their complaint.

If, however, the customer insists they do not wish to provide their details, we will record the issue as an anonymous complaint, ensuring we do not;

- Record their details on the complaints database
- Contact them again about the matter, and,
- The complaints data we record is complete, enabling us to fully consider the matter and take corrective action where suitable

Withdrawn Complaints

There may be situations that are reported that resolve themselves, or where the complainant does not wish to pursue their complaint. The Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager will act appropriately should the complaint merit further action, referral or investigation.

Vexatious Complaints

Complainants will be advised by the Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager where it is felt that the nature or the number of complaints made by them is deemed to be vexatious. The Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager will seek advice on this from a Senior Post Holder, as appropriate.

A vexatious complaint can be described as 'manifestly, unjustified, inappropriate, or improper use of a formal procedure'.

Vexatious complaints may be;

- Those where the evidence indicates a personal grudge, for whatever reason and the complainant is targeting their correspondence towards a particular staff member against whom they have a personal enmity.
- Where unreasonable persistence is applied in attempting to reopen an issue which has already been addressed and concluded.
- Those using abusive or aggressive language (going beyond the level of criticism the college or its staff should reasonably expect to receive).

Handling Anonymous Complaints

We value all complaints and treat all complaints seriously, including those made anonymously. We will take action to consider them further wherever it is proper to do so and we have information to make further enquiries. Failing this, we may decide not to pursue it – a decision which must be taken by the responsible Senior Manager.

Any anonymous complaint containing serious allegations will be referred to a Senior Post Holder immediately.

If we pursue an anonymous complaint, we will record the issues as an anonymous complaint on the complaints system. This will ensure the completeness of our data and allow us to take corrective action, where appropriate.

What To Do When An Issue Is Raised Or You Receive A Complaint

Please refer to the diagram on page 2 for guidance.

What exactly is the issue or complaint?

It is important to be clear about exactly what the customer is complaining about. You may need to ask the customer supplementary questions to get a full picture.

What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?

At the outset, clarify the outcome the customer wants. Of course, the customer may not be clear about this, so you may need to probe to further find out what they expect and whether they can be satisfied.

Stage 1 - Front Line Resolutions

Please refer to the diagram on page 2 for guidance.

Once you have established what the issue or complaint is and what the customer wants to achieve, you need to determine if you can achieve this for them by providing a front line resolution.

The customer may express dissatisfaction about more than one issue. This may mean you treat one element as a complaint, while directing the customer to pursue another element through an alternative route.

You may also explain that we value complaints and may use the information the customer has given when we review service standards in the future

You must always consider frontline resolution, regardless of how you have received the customer's complaint.

What is a Front Line Resolution?

In practice, front line resolution means resolving the complaint at the first point of contact with the customer.

Can I achieve this, or explain why not?

If you can achieve the expected outcome by providing an on-the-spot apology or explain why you cannot achieve it, you should do so.

The customer may expect more than we can provide. If so, you must tell them as soon as possible. An example may be where the customer is so dissatisfied with the location and day of a lecture that they demand both be changed, but we are only able to consider changing its location.

Who can resolve a Front-Line Resolution?

All members of staff are encouraged to resolve issues as soon as they arise and record the issues resolved via the Front Line Resolution button on the staff intranet. Staff should seek the support of their line manager should they require assistance with resolving front line issues in the first instance.

Any member of staff may deal with a front line resolution unless they are the subject of the complaint or have a clear conflict in the matter. In this instance the complaint should be handed to their immediate line manager within the department for resolution.

If I can't resolve this, who can help with frontline resolution?

If you cannot deal with the complaint because, for example, you are unfamiliar with the issues or area of service involved, pass details of the complaint to someone who can try to resolve it.

Front Line resolutions received via e-mail or letter should be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days. This can be provided via letter or email.

Examples of this could be an 'on-the-spot' apology, explanation or other action to resolve the complaint quickly. Our aim is to do this in as many cases as possible.

These issues are reported on termly by the Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager who can also be contacted for advice and support.

Extending the timescale of a Front Line Resolution

In exceptional circumstances, where there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, you may agree an extension of no more than five working days with the customer. This must only happen when an extension will make it more likely that the complaint will be resolved through front line resolution.

When you ask for an extension, you must get authorisation from the appropriate manager, who will decide whether you need an extension to effectively resolve the complaint. Examples of when this may be suitable include staff (or contractors) being temporarily unavailable. If, however, the issues are so complex that they cannot be resolved in five days, it is right to escalate the complaint straight to the investigation stage. Where appropriate you must tell the customer about the reasons for the delay, and when they can expect your response.

If the customer does not agree to an extension but it is unavoidable and reasonable, a senior manager must decide on the extension. You must then tell the customer about the delay and explain why the extension has been granted.

It is important that such extensions do not become the norm; only rarely should you extend the timeline at the front line resolution stage. All attempts to resolve the complaint at this stage must take no longer than **ten working days** from the date you receive the complaint.

The proportion of complaints that exceed the five-day limit will be evident from reported statistics. These statistics must go to our senior management team on a quarterly basis.

Closing the complaint at the front line resolution stage

You are likely to have to give the decision face to face or by telephone. If you respond face to face, by telephone or email, you need not write to the customer as well, but you may choose to do so. Alternatively, the customer may ask you to respond in writing in addition to a face to face discussion or a decision provided by email or telephone. It is important, however, to keep a full and accurate record of the decision you have reached and passed to the customer.

You should ensure that the response to the complaint addresses all the topics the college is responsible for and explains the reasons for our decision(s).

Recording of front line resolutions

After closing the complaint, details should be recorded by the member of staff via the Front Line Resolution button on the staff intranet.

When to escalate to the investigation stage

You must escalate a complaint to the investigation stage when;

- You have tried front line resolution but the customer remains dissatisfied and requests an investigation. This may happen immediately when you communicate the decision at the front line stage, or sometime later.
- The customer refuses to take part in front line resolution.
- The issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation.

- The complaint related to serious, high-risk or high-profile issues.
- The complaint relates to how personal data is processed or how a request to exercise individual rights under data protection legislation has been handled.

Take special care to identify complaints that might:

- Be serious, high-risk or high-profile, as these may require particular action, for example escalation to a Senior Post Holder, or,
- Raise critical issues that need senior management's direct input.

We define potential high-risk or high-profile complaints as involving:

- An allegation of corruption against a college employee
- A claim of dereliction of duty by a college employee
- A claim of personal injury that has incapacitated a customer
- A potentially significant risk to the college's operations
- A claim of discrimination with due regard to protected characteristics as set out in section 149(7) of the Equality Act 2010
- An allegation of significant harm or abuse or where there is a suspicion that someone may suffer significant harm
- Serious service failure, for example major delays in providing, or repeated failures to provide a service
- Significant and ongoing press interest

You must hand over all case notes and associated information to the officer responsible for investigating the complaint.

Stage 2 – Investigation / Formal Complaints Process

Investigation

Not all complaints are suitable for front line resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage are typically complex or require detailed examination before we can state our position. These complaints may have already been considered at the front line resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position.

Who can resolve a complaint?

Please refer to the diagram on page 2 for guidance.

What to do when you receive a complaint for investigation

It is important to be clear from the start of the investigation stage exactly what you are investigating, and to ensure that both the customer and the service understand the investigation's scope.

It may be helpful to discuss and confirm these points with the customer at the outset, to establish why they are dissatisfied and whether the outcome they are looking for sounds realistic. In discussing the complaint with the customer, consider three key questions:

- What specifically is the customer's complaint or complaints?

- What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?
- Are the customer's expectations realistic and achievable?

Timelines

The following deadlines are appropriate to cases at the investigation stage:

- Complaints must be acknowledged within **three working days**,
- You should provide a full response to the complaint as soon as possible but **not later than 15 working days** from the time you received the complaint for investigation.

Extension to the timeline

Not all investigations will be able to meet this deadline. For example, some complaints are so complex that they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 15-day limit. However, these would be the exception and you must always try to deliver a final response to a complaint within 15 working days.

If there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescale, senior management will set time limits on any extended investigation, as long as the customer agrees. You must keep the customer updated on the reason for the delay and give them a revised timescale for completion. If the customer does not agree to an extension but it is unavoidable and reasonable, then senior management must consider and confirm the extension. The reasons for an extension might include the following:

- Essential accounts or statements, crucial to establishing the circumstances of the case, are needed from staff, customers or others but they cannot help because of long-term sickness or leave.
- You cannot obtain further essential information within normal timescales, but have a reasonable expectation of doing so if there was an extension.
- Operations are disrupted by unforeseen or unavoidable events, for example industrial action or severe weather.
- The customer has agreed to mediation as a potential way of resolution.

These are only a few examples, and you must judge each case on its merits. However, an extension would be the exception and you must always try to deliver a final response to the complaint within 15 working days.

As with complaints considered at the frontline stage, the proportion of complaints that exceed the 15-day limit will be evident from reported statistics. These statistics must go to our senior management team on a quarterly basis.

Mediation

Some complex complaints, or complaints where customers and other interested parties have become entrenched in their position, may require a different approach to resolving the complaint. Where appropriate, you may consider using services such as mediation or conciliation using suitably trained and qualified mediators to try to resolve the matter and to reduce the risk of the complaint escalating.

Mediation will help both parties understand what has caused the complaint, so is more likely to lead to mutually satisfactory outcomes.

If you and the customer agree to mediation, revised timescales will need to be agreed.

Closing the complaint at the investigation stage

You must let the customer know the outcome of the investigation in writing or by their preferred contact method. Our response to the complaint must address all areas we are responsible for and explain the reasons for our decision.

You must record the decision, and details of how it was communicated to the customer, on the system for recording complaints. You must also make clear to the customer:

- Their right to appeal (appeals should be **made in writing to the Chief Executive**)
- The time limit for doing so (**within 15 working days of receiving the response to Stage 2**), and
- The contact details for them to make the appeal.

Stage 3 - Appeals

The right to appeal

An appeal will only be considered if there is new evidence, which was not made available at an earlier stage, or where the complainant feels that the investigations was not carried out fairly or thoroughly, and / or the findings were not borne out by the evidence.

Who to contact to Appeal

If a customer wishes to appeal they may do so in writing within 15 working days to:

David Jones OBE
Chief Executive
Coleg Cambria
Grove Park Road
Wrexham
LL12 7AB

Receiving an Appeal

Appeals received will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

Invitation to an Appeal Meeting

If an appeal meeting is deemed appropriate we will aim to provide one week's notice in advance of the meeting date. The appeal meeting should take place within 15 working days from receipt of the appeal request at a mutually convenient time. Where this is not possible we will aim to agree a suitable time for all parties involved.

The appellant has the right to bring someone with them to the meeting e.g. a student union representative, a friend, or a family member or advocate; however, appellants are not permitted to bring a legal representative.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made as necessary e.g. where English is a second language or there is an identified additional learning need. Please make us aware as soon as possible if any reasonable adjustments are required.

The Appeal Meeting

Should an appeal meeting be necessary, it will be conducted by the Chief Executive (or other suitably appointed Senior Post Holder). They may be accompanied, where appropriate, by a manager or another member of college staff dependent on the specialism required.

There will also be a note taker present at the meeting to ensure an accurate record is taken.

A final decision will not be provided at the meeting or at the end of the appeal meeting.

In Absentia

In the absence of the appellant, an appeal panel may be appointed to hear the appeal. The findings will be recorded and the appellant notified of the outcome.

Appeal Outcome

Following the Appeal we will provide written confirmation of our final decision within 10 working days and the matter will be considered closed.

If a customer is still unhappy with the outcome the complainant has the right at this stage to contact the relevant awarding body, university or the relevant qualification regulator.

Governance of The Feedback And Complaints Handling Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the management of feedback and complaints lies with the college's Chief Executive and Senior Post Holders (Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Chief Executive and Principal), who are accountable to the Governing Body.

Our final position on the complaint must be signed off by an appropriate Senior Post Holder and we will confirm that this is our final response. This ensures that our Senior Post Holders own and are accountable for the decision. It also reassures the customer that their concerns have been taken seriously.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive provides leadership and direction in ways that guide and enable us to perform effectively across all services. This includes ensuring that there is an effective feedback and complaints policy, with a robust investigation process that demonstrates how we learn from the complaints we receive. The Chief Executive may take a personal interest in all or some complaints, or may delegate responsibility to Senior Post Holders. Regular management reports assure the Chief Executive of the quality of complaints management.

Senior Postholders (SPHs)

The Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Chief Executive and Principal, on the Chief Executive's behalf, are responsible for;

- Managing complaints and the way we learn from them
- Overseeing the implementation of actions required as a result of a complaint
- Investigating complaints
- Ensuring appropriate written responses detailing our findings / decision are provided to customers
- Deputising for the Chief Executive on occasion if an appeal is made and the Chief Executive is unavailable

However, Senior Post Holders may decide to delegate some elements of complaints handling (such as investigations and the drafting of response letters) to appropriate members Senior Managers. Where this happens, Senior Post Holders should retain ownership and accountability for the management and reporting of complaints. They are also responsible for preparing and signing decision letters to customers, so they should be satisfied that the investigation is complete and that their response addresses all aspects of the complaint.

Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) & college Managers can, along with Senior Post Holders, be responsible for reviewing information following Stage 1 – Front Line Resolution and prior to the investigation at Stage 2 – Investigation / Formal Complaints Process commences. They may also be involved in the operational investigation and management of complaints handling. They are also responsible for contributing to the preparation of decision letters to customers to be sent by Senior Post Holders, so they should be satisfied that the investigation is complete and their response addresses all aspects of the complaint.

Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager

The Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager is responsible for

- Being the first point of contact for customers wishing to make a complaint via the website, via email or on the telephone.
- Providing guidance and support to all staff in the day-to-day application of the Feedback and Complaints Policy.
- Providing admin support to investigations, as needed.
- Ensuring timescales for Stage 2 – investigations / formal complaints are adhered to throughout the process.
- Ensuring Senior Postholders are informed of investigations / formal complaints received.
- Collating and reporting on positive feedback, front line resolution and investigation / formal complaints data.
- Collating written responses, as required, advising the customer of their right to appeal.

All College Staff

A complaint may be made to any member of staff in the college, so all staff must ensure they are aware of the Policy for handling complaints at the front line stage and for the receiving of positive feedback. They should also be aware of who to refer a complaint to, in case they are unable to personally handle the matter. We encourage all staff to try to resolve complaints early and as close to the point of service delivery as possible, and quickly to prevent escalation and customer dissatisfaction.

Feedback and Complaints Data

Complaints and customer feedback provide valuable information to us. One of the aims of this policy is to identify opportunities to improve services across Coleg Cambria. We must record all complaints systematically so that we can use the data for analysis and management reporting. By doing so, we can identify and tackle what causes complaints. Also, where appropriate, we can identify training opportunities, improve our service and highlight areas of good practice.

Senior management have an active interest in feedback and complaints and use information gathered to improve services across the college.

Recording complaints

To collect suitable data, we must record all complaints as follows:

- The customer's name and address.
- The date we received the complaint.
- The date the Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager received the complaint.
- The nature of the complaint.
- How we received the complaint.
- The department the complaint refers to.
- The date we closed the complaint at frontline resolution stage, if we did.
- The date we escalated the complaint to the investigation stage, if we did.
- Any action we took at the investigation stage.
- The date the complaint was closed at the investigation stage.
- The complaint's outcome at each stage.
- The complaint's underlying cause and any remedial action we took

We have structured systems for recording complaints, their outcomes and any resulting action. These provide a detailed record of services that have failed to satisfy customers.

Maintaining confidentiality

Confidentiality is important in complaints handling. It includes maintaining the customer's confidentiality and explaining to them the importance of confidentiality generally. We must always bear in mind legal requirements, for example, data protection legislation, as well as internal policies on confidentiality and the use of customers' information.

Reporting of feedback and complaints

We analyse details of feedback and complaints for information to ensure we identify good service, service failures and to take appropriate action. By regularly reporting on our analysis, we can tell management where services need to improve and existing areas of good practice.

On a quarterly basis we will publish the outcome of feedback and complaints and our actions in response. This shows areas of good practice, the improvements arising from complaints, and that complaints can influence our services.

It also helps to ensure transparency in our handling of feedback and complaints and reassure our customers that we value their feedback and complaints.

We must:

- Publicise on a termly basis complaints outcomes, trends and actions taken along with positive feedback received.
- Use examples to show how complaints have helped improve services.

We should report this information regularly (at least termly) to our senior management team.

We also report annually on our performance in handling feedback and complaints to our Governing Body. This includes statistics showing the volume and type of complaint as well as key performance details, for example on the time we took to resolve complaints and at what stage they were resolved.

Learning from complaints

At the earliest opportunity after closing the complaint, the complaint handler must inform the customer and staff of the relevant department about the investigation's findings and any recommendations.

Senior management will regularly review the information gathered from complaints and consider whether we could improve our services or update our internal policies and procedures.

As a minimum, we must:

- use complaints data to identify the root cause of complaints.
- take action to reduce the risk of recurrence.
- record the details of corrective action in the complaints file, and.
- systematically review complaints performance reports to improve service delivery.

Where we have found that our services should be improved, we must:

- Authorise the action needed to improve services.
- Designate an officer (or team) as the issue's 'owner', with responsibility for ensuring the action is taken and by when.
- Ensure the designated officer follows up to ensure the action is taken by the agreed date.
- where appropriate, monitor performance in the service area to ensure the issue has been resolved.
- ensure that our staff learn from complaints.

Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

In times of trouble or distress, people may act out of character. The circumstances leading to a complaint may result in the customer acting unacceptably. Customers who have a history of challenging or inappropriate behaviour, or have difficulty expressing themselves, may still have a legitimate grievance.

A customer's reasons for complaining may contribute to how they present their complaint. Regardless of this, we must treat all complaints seriously and properly assess them. However, the actions of customers who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on time and resources or unacceptable behaviour towards our staff. So we will apply our policies and procedures to protect staff from behaviour such as unreasonable persistence, threats or offensiveness from customers. If we decide to restrict a customer's contact with us, we will ensure our decision is communicated to them in an appropriate way, notifying them of their right of appeal. The decision to restrict contact will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. This will allow the customer the opportunity to demonstrate a more reasonable approach in the longer term.

What Should I Do About Matters of Public Interest / Serious Concerns

The college has a 'Whistle-blowing' Policy which relates to disclosure of matters of public interest / serious concerns such as alleged fraud, maladministration or unlawful activities.

Issues of this nature should be directed to:

Bethan Lloyd-Jones

Governance Officer and Clerk to the Corporation

Coleg Cambria

Grove Park Road

Wrexham

LL12 7AB

Email: Bethan.lloyd-jones@cambria.ac.uk

How Should I Complain About a Senior Post Holder (SPH)?

Complaints regarding Senior Postholders (Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Principal) should be directed to Bethan Lloyd-Jones, the Governance Officer and Clerk to the Corporation (Bethan.lloyd-jones@cambria.ac.uk)

Complaints About Staff

Complaints about staff can be difficult to handle, as there may be a conflict of interest for the staff investigating the complaint. When serious complaints are raised against staff, it is very important that someone independent of the situation conducts the investigation. These should be reported immediately via the reporting channels outlined within on the diagram on page 2.

Suggestions and Complaints About the Nursery, Kid's Club and Accommodation at Llety Llysfasi

All suggestions and complaints will be treated seriously and sympathetically.

If you have a suggestion or a complaint, please contact the following;

- The Nursery Manager
- Llety Llysfasi Manager
- The Kid's Club Co-Ordinator

If you are dissatisfied with the response, please contact the Higher Education Partnership & Compliance Manager at the College who will be happy to help resolve any issues.

Any complaints about these services can also be logged with;

CSSIW

North Wales Region

Government Office

Sarn Mynach

Llandudno Junction

LL31 9RZ

☎ 0300 062 5609

✉ cssiw.north@wales.gsi.gov.uk