



Complaints Handling Procedure

Annual Report 2018/19 (01 Aug 2018 to 31 July 2019)

7th October 2019

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1 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: P1-P6

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2018/19		2017/18	
1.0	Total number of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population				
	Number of complaints Received	161		188	
	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	25000	0.64	25000	0.75
2.0	Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed				
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	124	77.5%	152	80.9%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	26	16.25%	24	12.8%
	Number of Complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	10	6.25%	12	6.4%
	Open	1		0	0.0%
3.0	Number of Complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage as a % of complaints closed at that stage				
	Stage 1				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	77	62.1%	73	48.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	47	37.9%	79	52.0%
	Stage 2				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	8	30.8%	13	54.2%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	18	69.2%	11	45.8%
	Escalated				
	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	5	50.0%	4	33.3%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	5	50.0%	8	66.7%
4.0	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage				
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	522	4.2	789	5.2
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	449	17.3	407	17.0
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	232	23.2	202	16.8

5.0	Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales (S1=5 working days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	100	80.6%	106	69.7%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 5 working days	24	19.4%	46	30.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	21	80.8%	17	70.8%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	5	19.2%	7	29.2%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	8	80.0%	9	75.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	2	20.0%	3	25.0%
6.0	Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	21	87.5%	37	80.4%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	3	12.5%	9	19.6%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	5	100%	7	100.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	20%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	50.0%	3	100.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	50.0%	0	0.0%

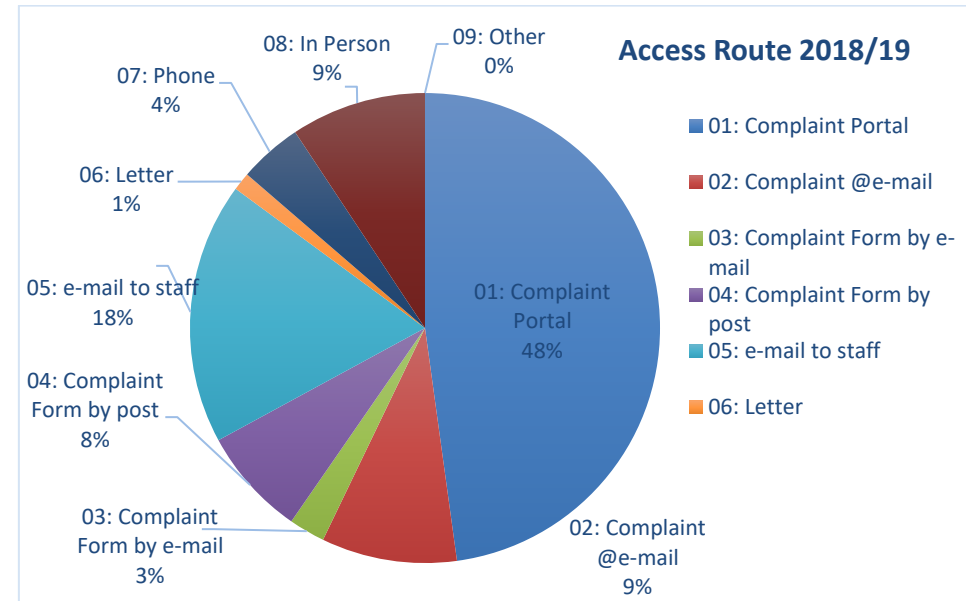
PI	Key Observations	Key	wd. = working days
1.0	Overall number of complaints decreased by 14%.		
2.0	Complaints closed at Stage 1 decreased by 18%.		
3.0	Significant decrease of 41% in the number of complaints not upheld at Stage 1.		
4.0	The average response times for escalated complaints has increased significantly by 38%. This has been impacted by an escalated complaint taking 78wd to close.		
5.0	A significant decrease of 48% in the number of Stage 1 complaints that were not closed within set timescales.		
6.0	A significant decrease of 45% in the number of complaints closed where an extension has been authorised.		

2 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR P7: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

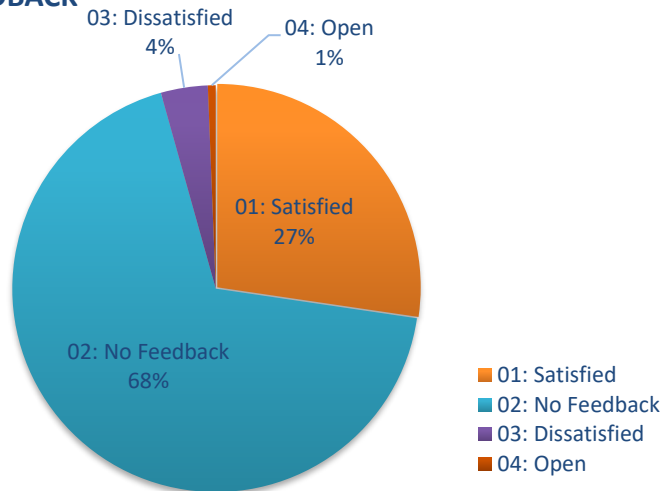
2.1 ACCESS TO COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

As part of the College’s Customer Care Charter, “City Listens” demonstrates our commitment to maintaining high standards and continuously seeking to improve our processes in order to provide a better service. Through “City Listens” process the College provides an online complaint portal to raise complaints and also a dedicated email address. Complaint forms are available in hard copy and electronic format, and can be posted or emailed. All access routes to the Complaint Handling Procedure are handled by members of the Performance Team who quickly identify the most appropriate member of staff to handle the complaint. Other routes include emailing staff directly, letter, phone or in-person.

The online complaint portal received nearly half of all complaints (48%) in 2018/19; and direct email to staff (at 18%) was the second most popular route of access to the Complaint Handling Procedure.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK 2018/19



2.2 FEEDBACK

The College requests feedback on responses to complaints and categorises feedback as "Satisfied", "Dissatisfied" and "No Feedback". The College also evaluates feedback against the complaint outcome of 'Upheld' or 'Not Upheld'.

In 2018/19, feedback was received for 50 of 160 closed complaints, and last year feedback was received for 50 of 188 complaints. In terms of satisfaction, this year 44 complainants were satisfied, which is an improvement on the 33 complainants expressing satisfaction last year.

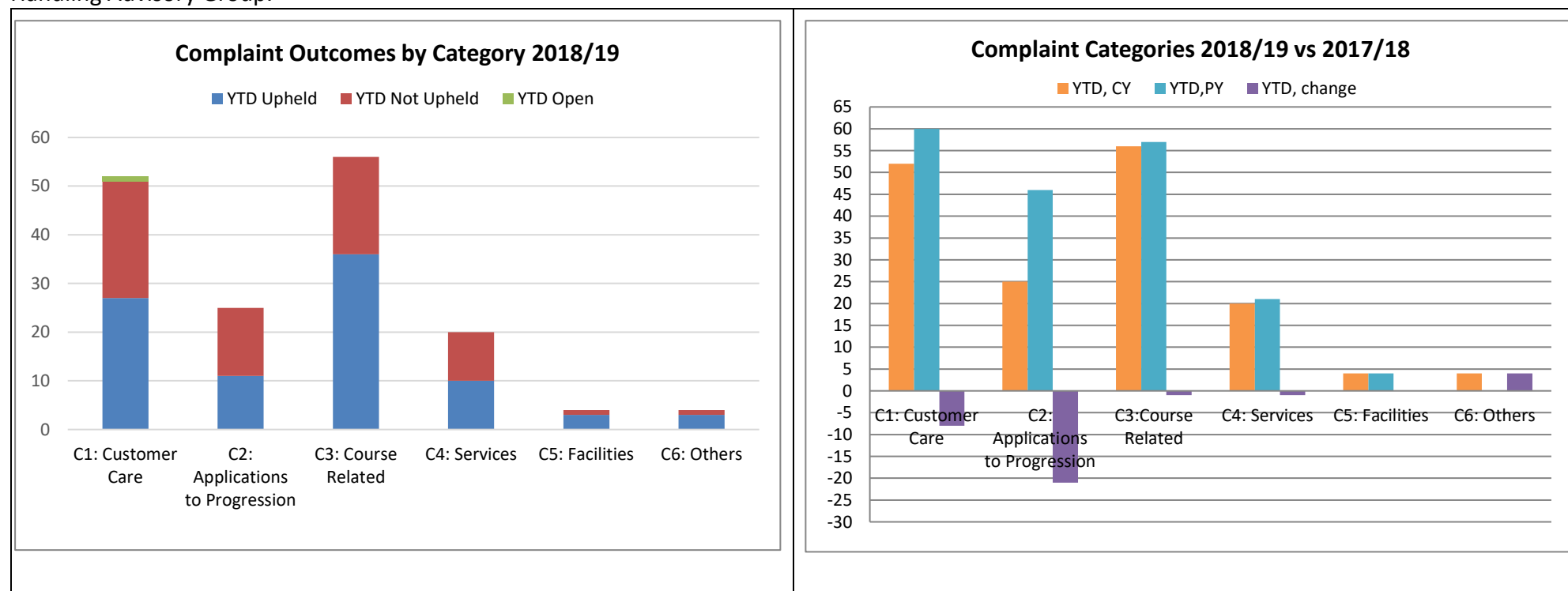
3 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR P8: LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

3.1 COMPLAINT REPORTING

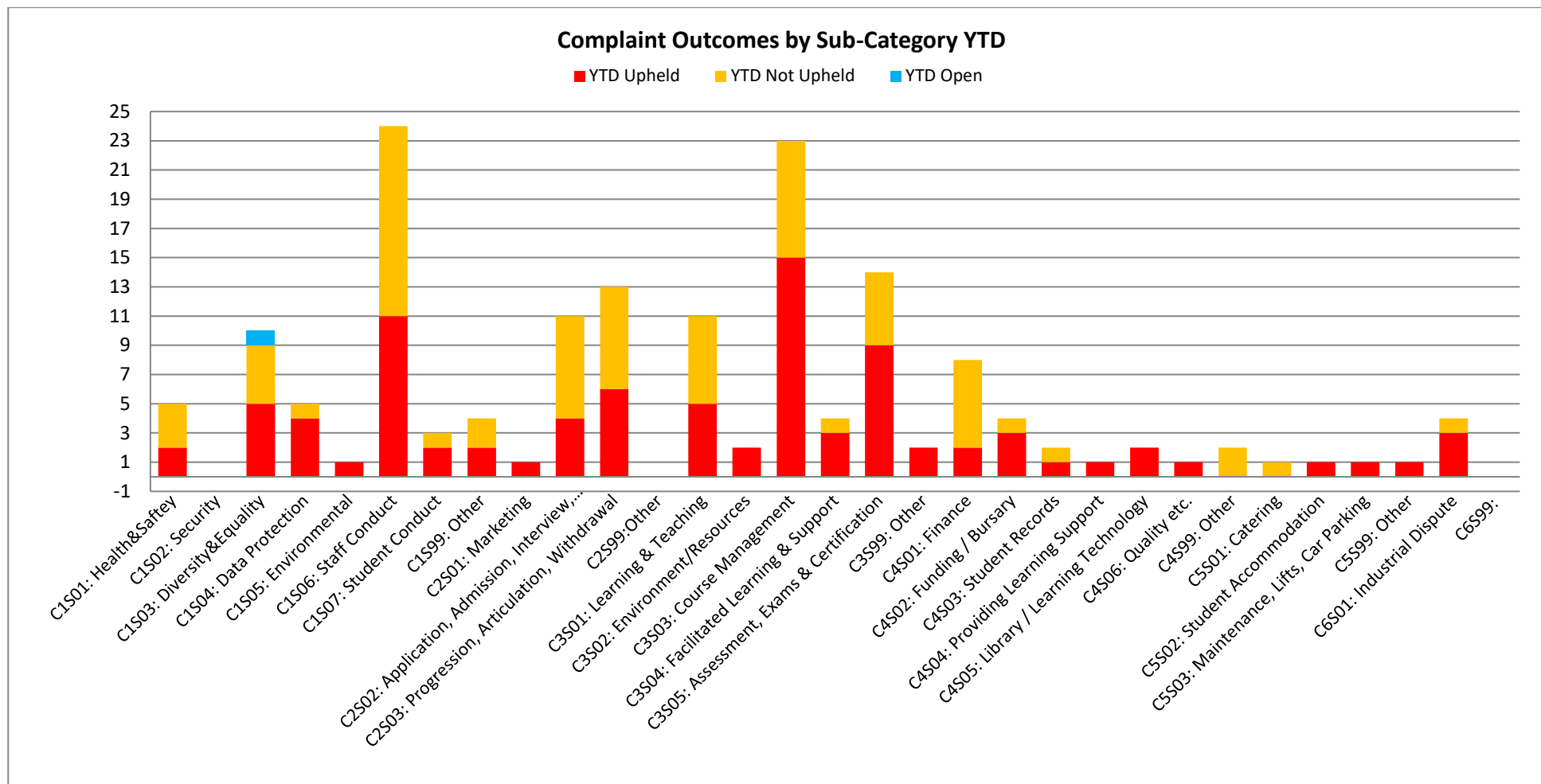
- **Quarterly Reports:** Prepared by Performance for the purpose of review by the Senior Management Team, Executive Leadership Team and approval by the Performance & Improvement Director for publishing on the College website.
- **Annual Report:** Prepared by Performance for the purpose of review by the College’s Senior Management Team, Executive Leadership Team and approval by the College Board for publishing on the College website.

3.2 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY CATEGORY AND COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

The College has adopted the standardised Complaint Categories and Sub-Categories developed by the College Development Network’s Complaint Handling Advisory Group.



3.3 COMPLAINT OUTCOMES BY SUB-CATEGORY



2018/19	Customer Care	52 (32%)	Applications to Progression	25 (15%)	Course Related	56 (35%)	Services	20 (12%)	Facilities	4 (3%)	Others	4 (3%)
2017/18	Customer Care	60 (32%)	Applications to Progression	46 (24%)	Course Related	54 (29%)	Services	24 (13%)	Facilities	4 (2%)	Others	0 (0%)

3.4 COMPLAINT THEMES, LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS AND IMPROVEMENT TO SERVICES

In 2018/19 the College received 161 complaints, which is 27 complaints less than the previous year. This positively follows the similar decrease from the total number of complaints received in 2016/17 (222 complaints) compared to 2017/18 (188 complaints).

The complaints received are spread across all categories: Customer Care (32%), Applications to Progression (15%), Course Related (35%), Services (12%), Facilities (3%) and Others (3%). With fewer complaints received in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18, the number of complaints has decreased for all categories, except for Others. This category received 4 complaints rather than 0, and all concerned the national industrial dispute across Scotland's Colleges. The category with the greatest decrease is Applications to Progression, which received 25 complaints down from 46.

CUSTOMER CARE

A total of 52 Customer Care complaints were received in 2018/19 compared with 60 the previous year representing a decrease of 8 complaints. Whilst the decrease was not consistent across sub-categories, those most strongly effected were Health & Safety (receiving 5 compared to 10 complaints) and Student Conduct (receiving 3 contrasted to 11).

C1S01: Health & Safety (5 complaints / 2 upheld)

The College received 1 complaint regarding its Smoke Free Campus policy at City Campus. This is a positive reduction from 3 complaints on this subject received the previous year. The student complained the policy was not being sufficiently reinforced, raising concerns about their health and the unpleasant experience for visitors. The College has previously put a number of measures in place to strengthen this policy, including signage, publicity on plasma screens and concierge patrols. A further briefing to Security Guards and Concierges was provided to focus on maintaining the entrance on Cathedral Street, which the complainant highlighted as a problem area. The College arranged for NHS to deliver a series of cessation classes for students and staff. This was offered from October 2018 to June 2019, with excellent success rates; and is planned again for September 2019 to April 2020.

During a Fire Alarm Actuation at City Campus the security barriers in some areas of the building did not automatically open when the fire alarm sounded. An investigation identified the root cause as an issue with the fire alarm programming meaning not all barriers were released. The College's external Facilities Management Company (FES FM) rectified the problem and gave full assurance it will not happen again. The specific complainant was at the barrier on Level 2 between the canteen and main foyer, and so the Fire Safety Officer apprised the student on alternative evacuation routes for future reference that are indicated by directional fire escape signage.

C1S03: Diversity & Equality (10 complaints / 5 upheld / 1 open)

Two complaints were raised by students about the manner staff had spoken to them after disclosing they have a disability;

- During a fire evacuation a student was correctly prevented by a Fire Warden from diverting from the specified evacuation route. However once the student disclosed their disability the Fire Warden should not have challenged them but rather guided them to the nearest Temporary Waiting Station. The Fire Safety (General) Briefing Note 1/2019 - Fire Warden Role and Responsibilities has been updated to emphasise this point and has been enforced during recent staff training sessions. An apology was given and a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) has also been agreed with the student.
- A student complained of numerous occasions where staff had disregarded their disability; most recently a staff member's response when the student asked for assistance with a faulty accessible door. An apology was offered to the student; and staff attended awareness training on "hidden disabilities". Actions were also identified to make accessible doors more reliable and furthermore an evaluation of accessibility needs and arrangements throughout the building. This is planned for Summer 2020.

Student attending an evening class complained they could not park in the blue badge parking spaces due to a number of unauthorised cars parked there. Tuesday is a busy time for evening classes and parking spaces are quickly occupied. An apology was given and assurance Concierges will patrol the blue badge bays.

An applicant complained about the experience at interview where inappropriate comments about their disability were made, the interviewer spent little time discussing their portfolio and the student left feeling the process was unfair and that they had been dismissed in a discourteous manner. Sincere apologies were expressed to the student; and internally awareness training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was reinforced to staff. Furthermore information for applicants about the interview process was revised to clarify that portfolios are reviewed by interviewers in advance and the interview is scheduled to only take 5-10 minutes.

C1S04: Data Protection (5 complaints / 4 upheld)

Student raised concerns of a data protection breach after assessment results were sent to all of the class in a bulk email rather than individually to each student. An apology was offered and staff will undergo refresher Data Protection training.

Two instances where a member of the public received bulk emails from the College after attending a short course provided by the College but organised by an external provider. This was due to contact details provided on the short course enrolment form which is then used to add students to the College mailing system. Recognising this is not appropriate for short courses, the College has updated the mailing system to set restrictions on sending "all student" emails and the FWDF team is looking to improve information that client companies provide their students regarding how their data will be used.

During the application process, a student's confidential report was made accessible to staff due to an administrative error. Apologies for this accidental data breach were expressed and assurance given that this information was not used in a discriminating manner against their application. The event was an isolated incident, the report was immediately removed and the breach was investigated through the College's Data Protection procedure to identify root causes and corrective / preventive action.

C1S05: Environmental (1 complaints, 1 upheld)

A resident near the Riverside campus complained that students were parking in private residential spaces despite street parking available close by. Apologies were made, the 'Respect our neighbours' message was displayed on plasma screens at both campuses and Riverside staff further reinforced this verbally to students.

C1S06: Staff Conduct (24 complaints / 11 upheld)

Two complaints were upheld where students complained about the manner in which members of staff handled service requests. Apologies were offered, and for one a tour of the sports facilities was arranged and for the other library staff were reminded about the service's rules and regulations in order to ensure consistent service in future.

Student complained that contractors working on the security barrier were aggressive and abusive towards them. The contractor explained their conduct was in response to the student trying to squeeze through the barrier without using their card and striking the closed Perspex barrier with some force. The contractor recognised they should have handled the situation more appropriately, and the student was reminded to use their card at barriers.

Two complaints from students about their lecturers' approach to giving feedback were upheld. One student disliked the open forum manner, and so in future the lecturer will sense check students' comfort with this method. One student was unhappy with the teacher's verbal and body language, which they perceived as negative. The student disclosed some challenges they faced and the issues have now been resolved to their satisfaction.

Numerous issues were raised by a student regarding their lecturer, including bringing forward assessment deadlines, lack of support/guidance and their attitude. Only one element was upheld, however, relating to the lecturer using inappropriate language in class. The lecturer acknowledged this and apologised for any upset.

A number of students made a complaint about a lecturer being insensitive to one of their classmates during a difficult time. The lecturer was prompting the student to deliver a presentation and the student was becoming increasingly distressed and unable to present. The investigation identified the lecturer had not been informed of the student's circumstances and has since offered to personally apologise.

Two complaints were received regarding inappropriate language and behaviour of catering assistants. Sincere apologies were expressed to both complainants. Whilst only one complaint was upheld, the Associate Dean promptly organised an awareness session for assistants on College Values and Behaviours as well as kitchen protocols, and arranged separate break and lunchtime areas for staff and students.

Two instances of clients complaining about staff. One involving the use of inappropriate language by staff towards the client and a student and the other a client witnessing one member of staff behaving badly towards their colleague. Apologies were offered and all staff concerned recognised that the situations should have been better handled.

Contractor working at the College complained of the derogatory comments made by a member of staff on passing which left a poor first impression. The matter is being progressed internally.

C1S07: Student Conduct (3 complaints / 2 upheld)

A student complained about the cleanliness of toilets in a particular area of the College and the etiquette of students who use them. In response, Facilities increased the cleaning frequency and Curriculum Heads for this area reminded students to be more mindful when using College toilets.

A student was unhappy about the inappropriate behaviour of one of their classmates, which they described as disturbing the class and negatively impacting their learning experience. Staff met with the student and offered to monitor the situation and deal effectively with any future unacceptable language and behaviour.

C1S99: Other (4 complaints / 2 upheld).

Two students complained they have not received payment four months after assisting at a World Skills event. Apologies were offered and gift vouchers arranged as per terms and conditions.

APPLICATIONS TO PROGRESSION

A total of 25 Application to Progression complaints were received in 2018/19 compared with 46 the previous year representing a 54% decrease. The decrease was apparent in all sub-categories, particularly Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment & Induction with 11 complaints received this year compared to 26.

C2S01: Marketing (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

Applicant complained that description of different level of similar courses on the College website was misleading and resulted in the student applying for a place on a Level 3 course (which is not specified as any level) rather than their intended choice of Level 5 (which is specified as a Level 5 course). By the time the applicant realised they had applied for the wrong course the Level 5 course was full. Apologies were given and tutor agreed to increase class size and applicant was given a place on the Level 5 course. The website has been updated to clearly define the Level 3 course.

C2S02: Applications, Admission, Interview, Enrolment & Induction (11 complaints / 4 upheld)

Student complained that they could not progress further applications during the summer due to their "1st choice application being on hold". Apologies were offered for the delay in progressing the first choice application due to the summer break. This was progressed when staff returned to work and the student was able to submit additional applications.

Applicant identified a number of issues associated with the application process including technical problems while trying to upload portfolios and attempting to cancel applications. They also complained of staff not responding to emails/voicemails and considered the online application process to be poorly worded. Technical problems associated with uploading portfolios have been taken up with IT. A review of the process for referring applications to faculties will be conducted to ensure that referrals are handled more effectively and a review of application process and website will be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

Student applied for both Level 5 (first choice) and Level 3 (second choice) of the same course and was offered a place on Level 3 course while also being added to reserve list for the Level 5 course. However Finance staff credited payment against the level 5 course in error and the College agreed to honour this and a place was given in the Level 5 course. Finance staff will check system to confirm course enrolment prior to taking payment.

A student complained about receiving conflicting communications regarding whether or not a short course had been cancelled. Admissions apologised for the administrative error and issued a refund for the course. Additional systems training was provided to temporary admissions staff and supervision increased to ensure this would not happen again.

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C2S03: Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal (13 complaints / 6 upheld)

Student requested to be withdrawn from course on 4th December 2018. Their last date of attendance was recorded as 24th November, the last day of Block 1, and since this was prior to 1st December an invoice for outstanding fees was triggered. However there was an inter-block week following the

end of the block during which time students should not have been considered absent and as such the student's last day of attendance should have been recorded as 1st December, negating the need to send an invoice for outstanding fees. Apologies were offered and the invoice cancelled. Staff will ensure withdrawal dates take into account any inter-block weeks.

A student complained they had been withdrawn from their course with no explanation and had received this information indirectly via My City. Apologies were offered with an explanation for the student's withdrawal, and staff were reminded of the importance of following the withdrawal process and ensuring students are informed.

A student wishing to withdraw from HND and re-enter to HNC group award complained their correspondence regarding this matter was not responded to. Apologies were given and Student Records processes the Group Award code transfer.

A current student's application to progress to HND Model Making at the College was unsuccessful and when applying for similar courses at different colleges a complaint was made on his behalf that lecturers did not provide references. The Dean of Faculty personally apologised to the student and the matter was handled internally.

COURSE RELATED

A total of 56 Course Related complaints were received in 2018/19, which is similar to the 57 received in 2017/18. The spread across sub-categories is also comparable, with marginal decreases for Learning and Teaching (-3 complaints) and Facilitated Learning & Support (-4 complaints); and small increases for Course Management (+3 complaints), Assessment, Exams & Certification (+1 complaint) and Other (+2).

C3S01: Learning & Teaching (11 complaints / 5 upheld)

At the conclusion of an evening course a student complained about elements of the teaching delivery, such as sharing personal experiences, covering the syllabus and inadequate support. Had the College been made aware of these issues at the time, action would have been taken to ensure the delivery was improved. This will be addressed for future classes and as a gesture of goodwill the complainant was offered a partial refund for the resit they had subsequently arranged.

Customer complained about several issues associated with the delivery of an evening class and wished a full refund. The College took on board the comments, identified areas for improvement and provided a full refund as requested.

A former student raised several issues about an evening course. Only one element was upheld regarding delay in arranging a resit and that students were undertaking a practical session in the same classroom as the resit was taking place. Apologies were offered for the error in the resit process leading to the delay and for the exam conditions.

Student complained about a number of learning and teaching issues. There were various contributing factors to the learning experience and the impact on the class had been underestimated, e.g. lecturer delivering the unit for this first time, associated learning and teaching materials were required to be developed and lecturer missing classes to go on College business. A unit specialist was assigned to provide additional support to the class.

Five students complained about a lecturer's teaching techniques and support, delay in providing exam results and unsatisfactory explanation for refusal to grant resit; due to staff turnover students had three Curriculum Heads which meant some periods of no key contact. The Dean and two Associate Deans met with the students and a resit opportunity was arranged promptly. This met the complainants' desired outcome.

C3S02: Environment/Resources (2 complaints / 2 upheld)

A student complained about technical issues with the equipment in their class along with cancelled classes due to strike action. Whilst the College had proactively extended the course to cover missed class-time the dates were not suitable for the student due to personal circumstances and so a full refund was approved.

Two students complained that the computers and WIFI were not working properly, resulting in difficulties saving work. Apologies were offered. The IT Department identified the College Storage Area Network (SAN) was having technical troubles at the time of the incident meaning auto-save/auto-recovery stopped working; issues with the WIFI were caused by the external internet provider.

C3S03: Course Management (23 complaints / 15 upheld)

Student complained about the course programme structure and the impact on the learning experience including a low pass rate for a specific unit. The College accepted that there were shortcomings in the course structure which would be addressed by a thorough review to ensure the units are sequenced appropriately. The problematic unit has now been replaced in the Group Award and the revised unit will be stringently quality assured.

Two complaints associated with stand-in staff covering for staff absence. In both examples complainants emphasised they were not being critical of the covering staff.

- Customer complained that a stand-in lecturer was not delivering the content of the evening class as advertised on College website. It was accepted that the course was not meeting customer's expectations and due to further unforeseen circumstances the course was cancelled and the class refunded.

- Customer complained that a stand-in lecturer could not deliver a specific aspect of the evening class as advertised. In addition the start of the course had been delayed and classes extended until 9pm to make up lost time, however Estates staff required students to be out the building before then. The customer was withdrawn from the course as requested and a full refund provided. The course information on the College website was updated more accurately reflect the delivery of the specific aspect of the course mentioned in this complaint. Estates staff have been informed of the need to extend the class time and for the building to remain open.

Four complaints were upheld that shared 'poor communication' as a common root cause.

- Student beginning the 3rd Year of a course was sent an email and timetable intended for 4th year students by mistake. The student turned up on the day as requested only to discover the mix-up which left them stressed and anxious and missing the remainder of the week. The College apologised for the distress caused and arrangements were quickly put in place to allow the student to catch up with the missed work and SAAS contacted to reassure them that their funding was not affected.
- Customer complained that staff did not respond to their emails requesting details of materials to bring to evening class and therefore did not attend and requested a refund. Apologies were offered and a refund given.
- Customer complained that they travelled in for the first evening class of a course to find it had been cancelled, despite having checked it was on with admissions staff twice that day. They also complained they had not received an email sent to all class members to inform them that class had been cancelled. The College investigated the complaint and confirmed the student was on the list of email recipients and a follow up test email was successfully received. As a root cause could not be identified, an explanation could not be given regarding the email. In future, admissions staff will be informed of short notice class cancellations to ensure students that call are correctly advised. An apology was offered for the inconvenience and the student's travelling expenses refunded while the missed class was rescheduled for a later date. An apology was also offered for the delay in providing customer with a student card which has now been provided.
- A student enrolled on a Thursday evening class of a short course which also ran on a Tuesday evening. The student missed the first class and following a misunderstanding they attended the next two Tuesday classes to find the first one cancelled and to be told at the second to attend the Thursday class. Apologies were made for the wasted journey and student refunded travelling costs and course fees.

Student arrived at a catch-up class to be told that the invitation was sent in error and that they could not attend. Apologies were offered in response to the complaint and the request should have been honoured.

Student complained that lecturer regularly finished evening classes early. Apologies were offered and the finishing time of the class clearly defined.

Student was absent from College and complained course material was not available on MyCity, that were not notified of a forthcoming assessment, and upon returning to College were prevented from sitting the assessment. It was explained that an alternative approach to MyCity was being trialled in

class during student's absence and apology was made for not also making the material available on MyCity which has now been rectified. It was considered best to delay the student's assessment since they had missed many classes. They have since sat the assessment.

Student complained that the process for selecting a student to work on an external project was unfair. Whilst the student was reassured that there was no 'favouritism' at play, staff accepted the process could be construed as unfair and so a different approach will be taken in future.

A student complained about disruption to learning due to staff absence, lack of communication regarding classes not being covered and uncertainty around implications if absence continues. Curriculum Head apologised to the student and provided a revised submission date for the class' current essay to take account of disruption. A substitute lecturer was immediately appointed whilst the College recruited bank staff to prevent this situation happening again.

Student complained about short notice of Easter revision classes. The investigation identified numerous notifications across different communication channels and so apologised for not providing adequate, additional, verbal information. Going forward tutors will provide fuller details during class and personally email students regarding revision courses as soon as the details have been confirmed.

Student undertaking a Distance Learning course complained they were not receiving the standard of support described on the College website. Once accepted onto the course the student had not been provided with a point of contact or names of lecturers. The student contacted numerous College departments and lecturers with queries about issues with quizzes, tutorial questions and for coursework to be marked, but received only a holding response or no response. The College explained the Distance Learning programme is in the process of being restructured. Apologies were offered to the student, along with a direct contact and assurance that their queries would be resolved.

A vocational course within the Chartered Institute of Housing's education programme, had a last minute class cancellation due to staff absence. At the cancelled class the Curriculum Head apologised to all students and offered reimbursements for travel expenses. Subsequently a complaint was raised requesting a refund for the cancelled class, as well as issues regarding lecturer not responding to emails, deadlines missed and waiting 2 months for essay results. A refund for the cancelled class was provided and apologies offered for deadlines missed and delay in providing essay mark due to staff turnover. The element regarding no response to emails was not upheld as an alternative contact for the lecturer had been provided.

C3S04: Facilitated Learning & Support (4 complaints / 3 upheld)

Three complaints were made by students who attended a social media workshop that covers contentious and sensitive topics such as racism, sexism, reputation, discrimination, judgemental attitudes. Students complained about having to attend the session and staff member's delivery. The latter was not upheld and whilst apologies were made to students that the session made them feel uncomfortable, it was reiterated how the workshop intended

to create conversation and debate within a safe environment. Regarding attendance was upheld; in future the content of such workshops will be explained to students in advance with the option to attend or not.

C3S05: Assessment, Exams & Certification (14 complaints / 9 upheld)

Student complained about the lack of assistance and conflicting communication from staff in organising their re-sits for four units. Apologies were offered for the inconvenience and a single point of contact was established and plan agreed.

Student did not pass an assessment and complained about the marking process. At Stage 1 the complainant was offered a resit free of charge. After raising dissatisfaction with this outcome, however, the complaint was escalated. Further investigation upheld the complaint and offered re-assessment of the unit at no additional cost to enable student to gain qualification.

Miscommunication between internal departments resulted in student being misinformed of where and when to collect their certificate. Apologies were offered and the certificate was delivered to the student in class, who was happy to consider the matter closed.

Student complained they had not received their certificate despite numerous requests. Apologies were offered for the delay in responding to requests and this is being further considered. The investigation also revealed a technical issue that prevented unit results from being signed off and this too is under investigation to prevent a recurrence. All the student's units have now been signed and the certificate progressed. The personal payment award for the completion of the course has also been processed.

A student complained about receiving conflicting information regarding whether or not they had passed an HND course. The investigation uncovered that contradictory information had not been provided, but the College did apologise for delayed response to student's requests for clarity.

Student complained class' first assessment had not been graded. Whilst student acknowledged lecturer went on sick leave during this time, the 10-week delay was significant. The investigation realised the lecturer had intended to complete the marking despite being off ill but had been unable to. At this time an alternative lecturer was contracted to mark the assessment, but had then also become unwell. Due to poor communication from lecturers to Curriculum Head, the delay became extensive. Therefore the Curriculum Head marked and graded all assessments, providing feedback to every student and uploading this on MyCity for immediate access.

Student was awaiting Diploma certificate for 10 weeks after being advised it could take up to 8 weeks, and did not receive response to emails. Apologies were offered, and it was discovered that a technical issue uploading results on awarding body website had caused delay. The issue was rectified, and priority placed on returning results within 2 weeks.

A student had not received certificates for three courses undertaken and also complained about no response to HNC application. Certificates were promptly provided, and Student Services ensured all certificates for this faculty had been issued. There was no record of an HNC application, and so this element was not upheld. The student was advised to resubmit, and a conditional offer was made.

Student complained they had been marked as fail and therefore unable to progress to HND. Student was also unhappy with no response from lecturers regarding this. The faculty confirmed the student had not achieved 15 credits required to pass and so did not progress to HND; thus this element was not upheld. Miscommunication between staff members led to no response to student, and so apologies were offered.

C3S99: Other (2 complaints / 2 upheld)

Former student attended two courses at the College and paid both invoices related to this. Further invoices were issued to the student by mistake and a complaint was lodged. It was identified that the error was caused during the course set-up resulting in an invoice being incorrectly issued for a unit that was already invoiced as part of the overall course. Refunds were processed for all affected students, and internal training provided to staff on course set-up to prevent this issue reoccurring.

Former student had left course work at the College for end of year show. When contacting College to retrieve the work, they had no response followed by advice that the work may have been destroyed. The student also complained the College had not provided an academic reference. Apologies were provided for the delay and misinformation. The work was tracked down by the complaint handler and returned to the student. Tutor made contact with the student to provide a reference.

Services

For Services, 20 complaints were received in 2018/19 and 21 the year prior, representing a small 4% decrease. Differences can be seen in Finance that received 8 complaints this year compared to 3 previous. In comparison, Student Records and Other had the greatest decrease (from 5 to 2, and 6 to 2, respectively).

C4S01: Finance (8 complaints / 2 upheld)

Parent of student complained about the College's debt recovery processes after receiving a 'first reminder' for payment approximately 6 months after the student had called Finance to query the debt. The reminder was dated 8 days before the date letter was received leaving the recipient 2 days to respond within the required 10 days, before the matter would be passed on to a debt collector. Apologies were offered for not recording and acting on the initial phone enquiry and for the alarm caused by what was effectively 2 days' notice. The department had intentionally delayed posting to prevent

the letter arriving at the weekend. The department is closed at the weekend and so immediate enquiries cannot have been dealt with potentially causing distress to the letter recipient. Staff would have taken this into account in determining the notice period. The department also considered that previous reminders were sent, however cannot provide evidence since currently when retrieving hard copies from the system these will be printed with the date they were printed on. The issue with the outstanding debt has been resolved. Staff reminded to record phone call enquiries and act on them accordingly to avoid these issues escalating.

A complaint was made on behalf of a student about an invoice received for a payment already made. The investigation recognised a reminder letter was sent out in error during a major upgrade to the Finance System that had caused some delays and backlogs that were being addressed. The College confirmed receipt of payment and apologies were offered.

C4S02: Funding / Bursary (4 complaints / 3 upheld)

Student complained the College had not responded to several requests for formal confirmation that they did not achieve their HNC at the College, which was affecting SAAS payments. The College had no record of the request and contacted SAAS to provide the required information, sending the student a signed letter for their records.

Student complained that a meeting with student advisor was cancelled at short notice. All career advisors appointments for the week had been cancelled to allow additional time for advisors to check UCAS applications for students applying to university. To minimise impact students were advised that UCAS workshop would be available each day at lunchtime and on one evening. Going forward if an appointment has to be cancelled a student will be contacted in advance to check whether they can attend a workshop instead of an appointment. It will also be made clear that booked appointments will be honoured. Apologies were offered and a meeting scheduled for the day after the scheduled meeting.

Having previously withdrawn, a student was preparing to recommence the course and had contacted the College with queries regarding their bursary and a programme of work. The student complained about receiving no response and requested clarity on whether they needed to apply for a bursary. The College apologised for no reply, and advised on the bursary application. The programme of work was also supplied by the lecturer.

C4S03: Student Records (2 complaints / 1 upheld)

Student complained that after 1 week of an intensive 4 week course that had yet to receive their student card preventing them from borrowing library books. Apologies were offered and a card provided. Investigation revealed the smart card report for printing cards at the beginning of the session had not been set to chronological order, which would have resulted in the short course being printed earlier. In future, data provided to library systems will include details of those students who are enrolled but do not have a smart card.

C4S04: Providing Learning Support (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

Parent complained their daughter had a wasted and stressful journey to College when staff failed to turn up to a scheduled meeting. Regrettably staff overlooked the updated timetable and missed the appointment. Apologies were offered and all staff have been made aware of the complaint and requested to regularly check timetables.

C4S05: Library / Learning Technology (2 complaints / 2 upheld)

Two students complained about noise level in the library at Riverside campus. Students are minded to be respectful of others in the library and staff will check regularly and address any issues accordingly.

C4S06: Quality (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

A client complained that College staff had not responded to multiple communication attempts regarding credit score qualifications. The College apologised for this and explained the situation was unfortunately caused by a chain of staff absences. The piece of work was appropriately picked up.

Facilities

A total of 4 Facilities complaints were received in 2018/19, the same as 2017/2018. The spread across sub-categories widened, however, with 1 rather than 0 complaints received this year for Maintenance, Lists, Car Parking, and Other; whilst 1 rather than 2 complaints were received for both Catering and Student Accommodation.

C5S01: Catering (1 complaint / 0 upheld)

A student raised various issues about the cost and quality of College catering as well as staff behaviour. This was not upheld as the catering is competitively priced to other higher and further education institutions; and the student did not accept offers to meet and discuss other elements.

C5S02: Student Accommodation (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

Student complained WIFI in the halls of residence was not working and was impacting on study time. In addition they complained of a faulty vacuum cleaner and missing shelves. College accepted there had been an issue with the WIFI which was fixed and tested over the summer. The student's device required a specific fix which was completed successfully. A new vacuum was supplied and additional shelving provided.

C5S03: Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

Student complained that toilets closest to their classroom were being cleaned at break time. This meant the toilets could not be accessed during the short break time, causing inconvenience. Facilities recognised this as an issue and amended the cleaning schedule as appropriate.

C5299: Other (1 complaint / 1 upheld)

Complaint received from a student about no cups by the water fountains and being unable to obtain a “free water bottle” advertised. The College acknowledged this as part of its endeavour to be more eco-friendly and reduce its carbon footprint; and explained free water bottles can be collected from Student Services.

Others

Four complaints were received under ‘Others’ this year compared to 0 in the previous.

CS601: Industrial Dispute (4 complaints / 3 upheld)

Four complaints regarding the industrial dispute were received from students, concerned about the disruption to their studies. The College acknowledged their concerns and described the measures in place to allow them to finish their courses. Support included keeping College facilities open during strike days, seeking alternative arrangements for practice assessments as required, ensuring exams will proceed, endeavouring to process results timely, and offering pro-rata refunds for cancelled evening classes. Only 3 of the 4 complaints were upheld, however, as the fourth complained they had been refused a pro-rata refund for their fulltime course affected by the strikes. This was not upheld as refunds are not offered to full time further or higher education qualifications.