

## Board of Management Learning and Teaching Committee

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 28 February 2017</b>
<b>Paper No.</b>	<b>LTC3-I</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Subject of Paper</b>	<b>SPSO Annual Complaint Summary 2015/16</b>
<b>FOISA Status</b>	<b>Disclosable</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Douglas Dickson, Performance and Improvement Director</b>
<b>Date of production</b>	<b>19 February 2017</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>For Noting</b>

### 1. Recommendations

The committee is asked to note the attached Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) complaint template report for academic year 2015/16.

## **2. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to note the College's complaints for academic year 2015/16.

## **3. Context and Discussion**

The College previously signed to the SPSO Further Education Complaint Handling Procedure. In accordance with this procedure we are required to publish our performance in the resolution of complaints to them in the format attached.

## **4. Impact and implications**

In accordance with the procedure the target for resolution of Stage 1 complaints is 5 days and Stage 2 complaints 20 days. In 2015/16 the average days to close a Stage 1 complaint was 4.2 days and Stage 2 19.6 days.

We continue to publish our complaints to our Website as required by SPSO.

Each complaint received by the College is evaluated to identify the lessons that might be learnt from their resolution to improve our students' experience.



## Complaints Handling Procedure

Annual Report 2015/16 (01 Aug 2015 to 31 July 2016)

Published : 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### Contents

1. Performance Indicators P1-P6 (quantitative measures)
2. Performance Indicator P7: Customer Satisfaction
3. Performance Indicator P8: Learning from Complaints

## 1 Performance Indicators: P1-P6

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2015/16		2014/15	
1.0	<b>Total number of complaints received &amp; complaints received per 100 population</b>				
	Number of complaints Received	153		117	
	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	25000	0.6	25000	0.5
2.0	<b>Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed</b>				
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	115	75.2%	86	73.5%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	28	18.3%	23	19.7%
	Number of Complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	10	6.5%	8	6.8%
	Open	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3.0	<b>Number of Complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage as a % of complaints closed at that stage</b>				
	<b>Stage 1</b>				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	74	64.3%	49	57.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	41	35.7%	37	43.0%
	<b>Stage 2</b>				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	12	42.9%	12	52.2%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	16	57.1%	11	47.8%
	<b>Escalated</b>				
	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	4	40.0%	2	25.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	6	60.0%	6	75.0%
4.0	<b>Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage</b>				
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	471	4.2	271	3.2
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	549	19.6	436	19.0
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	149	14.9	100	12.5

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	99	86.1%	74	86.0%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	16	13.9%	12	14.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	17	57.1%	17	73.9%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	6	42.9%	6	26.1%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	9	90.0%	8	100.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	1	10.0%	0	0.0%
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)	11	68.7%	11	91.7%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days ( extension)	5	31.2%	1	8.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days ( extension)	10	83.3%	6	100.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days ( extension)	2	16.7%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days ( extension)	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

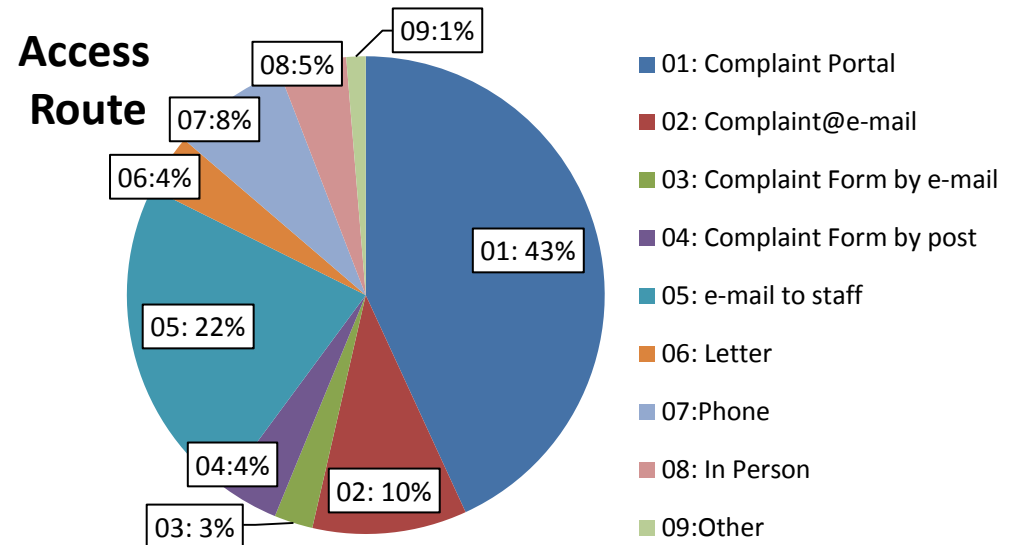
PI	Key Observations
1.0	The College received 153 complaints in 2015/16 compared with 117 the previous year representing an INCREASE of 31%.
2.0	The number of complaints handled at each stage was very similar to the previous year; with 3 out of 4 handled at Stage 1.
3.0	A slight increase in the number of complaints upheld in total – 59% compared with 54% for the previous year.
4.0	Average response times slipped slightly across all stages while remaining within the specified targets; influenced perhaps by the increase in the volume of complaints received.
5.0	Number of complaints closed out at Stage 1 within target remains at 86% while there is a significant decrease in the number of Stage 2 complaints closed out within target to 57% compared with 74% in previous year.
6.0	A total of 7 complaints closed out beyond extension limits compared with 1 in the previous year

## 2 Performance Indicator P7: Customer Satisfaction

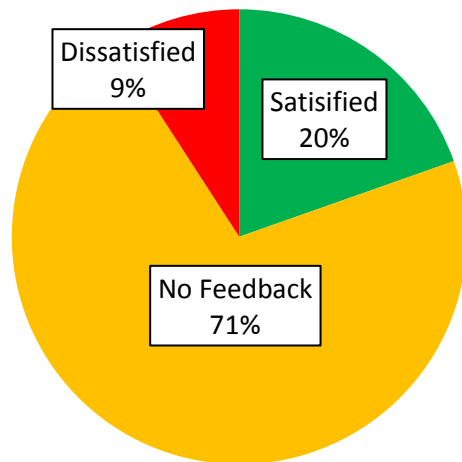
### 2.1 Access to Complaint Handling Procedure

Through our “City Listens” process the College provides an on-line Complaint Portal to raise complaints and also a dedicated e-mail address. Complaint Forms are also available in hard copy or electronic format which can be posted or e-mailed. All these routes are handled by members of the Performance Team who quickly identify the most appropriate member of staff to handle the complaint. Other routes include e-mailing staff directly, letter, phone or ‘in person’.

The on-line complaint portal and direct e-mail to staff remain the most popular routes of access to the Complaint Handling Procedure.



### Customer Feedback 2015/16



### 2.2 Feedback

The College requests feedback on the 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'

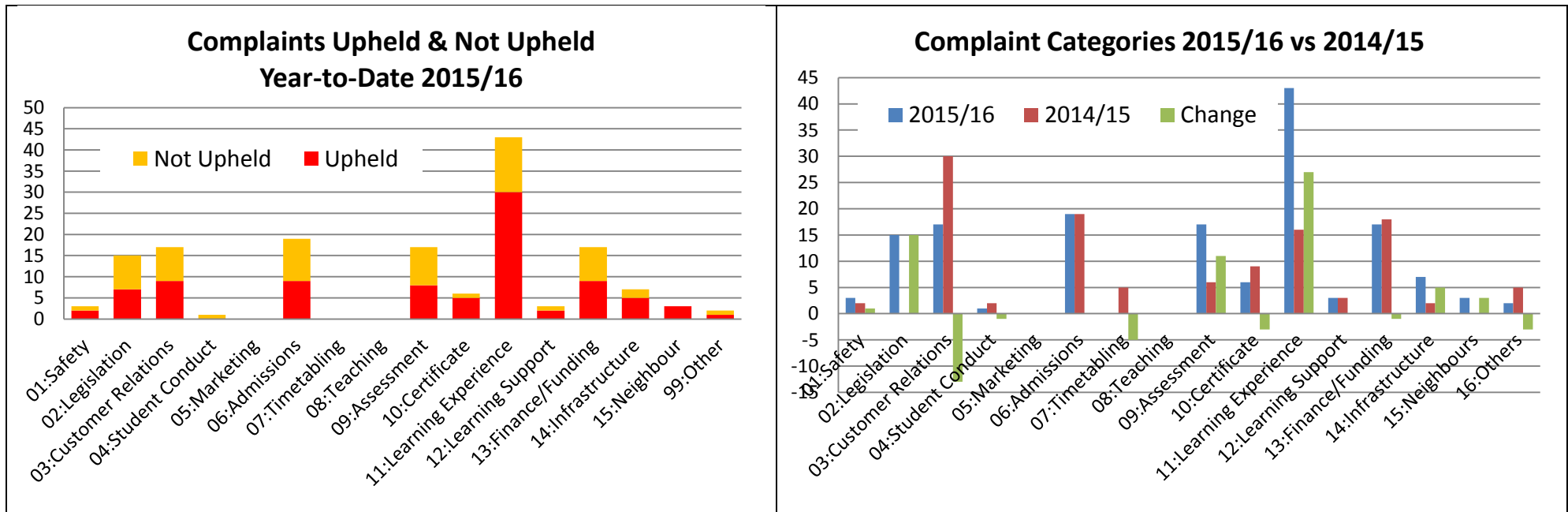
Feedback from customers has improved to 29% compared with 17% in the previous year, including from those customers expressing satisfaction improving to 20% from 11%.

### 3 Performance Indicator P8: Learning from Complaints

#### 3.1 Complaint Reporting

Complaint Reports are prepared Monthly and Quarterly for the purpose of review by the College’s Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team. The Quarterly Reports are published on the College web-site. An Annual Complaint Report is prepared for the purpose of review by the College’s Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team and approval by the College Board for publishing to the College web-site. A Complaint Chart is also produced on a monthly basis and published on the College Customer Service Excellence web-page.

#### 3.2 Complaints Received by Category and Complaint Outcomes



### 3.3 Complaint Themes, Lessons Learned and Improvement to Services

The increase of 31% in the number of complaints received this year is fuelled by an increase (to varying degrees) in complaints received in 6 of the 16 defined categories of complaints and in particular Learning Experience , Legislation and Assessment. The increase in complaints has been offset with a decrease in 6 of the categories including significant reduction in Customer Relations complaints.

The 'Top Category' distribution includes the same top four as last year, albeit in a different order of **Learning Experience** (28%), **Admissions** (12%), **Customer Relations** (11%), **Assessment** (11%) and **Finance & Funding** (11%). These are now joined by **Legislation** (10%) and combined these 5 categories account for 80% of the complaints received.

#### Legislation: Lesson Learnt

The College upheld 5 complaints associated with accessibility during 2015/16 including two associated with a faulty accessible lift in the Temporary Teaching Accommodation put in place during the building of Riverside Campus. The class was relocated in the new Riverside Campus where the students played an active role in an 'auditing' the accessible doors, lifts, toilets etc. and any problems were handled through the complaint process and included in a wider post occupancy evaluation of the new campus.

A student was not provided with the supported learning materials at the beginning of the class. A member of staff taking the class for the first time was unaware of the student's needs which were defined in their Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP). Once informed by the student the materials were made available. The College did not uphold the student's complaint of discrimination however lessons were learned and Faculty Directors will ensure staff confirm that PLSP requirements are in place in advance of the class.

#### Admissions: Lessons Learnt

An applicant was invited for interview only to be informed that their qualifications did not meet the minimum entry requirements for the HNC course of their choice and was sent home without any advice being offered about alternative courses. The College apologised and offered the applicant a place on the NC course which they declined, informing the College that they had a place on the HNC course at another College. The College recognised that the term 'relevant' in the entry requirement of "2 or more Highers in relevant subjects such as ...." is open to interpretation and on this occasion the student's second higher did not meet the Faculty's expectations. All course entry



requirements have been reviewed and where applicable changed to be specific and unambiguous. The changes will be in place for 2017/2018 session with the on-line applications system going live on January 2017. Staff conducting interviews were reminded to consult the College Interview Guidance notes.

The College received several complaints from students that were unsuccessful in their application to progress to the next level of their respective courses. Although these were not upheld there are clearly lessons to be learned for the College in raising the awareness of the criteria for progression, managing students' expectations and dealing promptly with complaints of this nature. The processes in place across the Faculties will be reviewed and an overarching College progression process developed and implemented in Session 2016/17.

### **Learning Experience: Lessons Learnt**

A common theme in this broad category was the disruption to classes due to long-term staff absence and one-off staff absence as a result of industrial dispute. The College apologised for the disruptions and contingency plans were put in place to recover the lost tuition time. The risks associated with the absence of staff in highly specialised areas of the curriculum will be reviewed and the Risk Management Action Plan updated.

Issues with course management were a theme in complaints and in student surveys. It was recognised that timetabling of students was central to course management. The College undertook a review of timetabling during the academic year and implemented its recommendations. This led to the appointment of a Curriculum Head to manage timetabling activities and ensuring processes are clear and understood prior to the move to the new City campus.

A client complained about class rooms not being fit for purpose for their students and the interim actions taking to alleviate the issue which have now been resolved following the transfer of some classes to the new City campus which opened in August 2016.

A complaint from a student unable to access the library to study due to an event being held in the vicinity resulted in the introduction of Event Learning Impact Assessment process in order to strike the right balance of providing learning opportunities and minimising disruption to learning.

The College created the role of Student Experience Director to provide an overview of the learning experience of students to ensure that key engagement activities lead to enhancement. The structural change will be further strengthened by the appointment of a Vice Principal Student Experience.

**Certificates: Lessons Learnt**

Several complaints were received from students with respect to the poor level of service in the processing of results and the provision of certificates from the College and an Awarding body. This, by its nature, is a time-consuming and the College and Awarding body are reviewing the process to identify any opportunities to reduce timelines and avoid any unnecessary delays as well as improve the lines of communication with the students. The process has been included in the Course Student Guide 2016/17 to help better manage expectations.

**Finance / Funding: Lessons Learnt**

An error in recording the last day attendance of a student prior to their withdrawal from the course triggered a request for outstanding fees that were not due. An on-line dashboard has been developed to alert staff to any discrepancies between last day of attendance and student withdrawal dates as part of an overall review of the Student Withdrawal Procedure.

**Infrastructure: Lessons Learnt**

The College recognised that the implementation of a new consistent Wi-Fi system had proved extremely challenging and that the variety of the individual (almost per device) requirements within the student accommodation presented an additional level of technical challenge. The wireless network Eduroam (a secure wireless service which has been specifically developed for the education community) was identified as the solution and has been implemented across the College providing a much improved and consistent service. A student survey confirmed that the introduction of Eduroam had resolved the issues identified by students.

**Complaint Handling Procedure: Lessons Learnt**

The role of Customer Relationship Manager was created at the College during Session 2015/16 to manage the Complaint Handling Procedure and explore synergies with other established stakeholder feedback processes to ensure that opportunities for improvement are identified and acted upon to improve the stakeholder experience.

The Complaint Handling Advisory Group (a collaboration between the representatives of College's throughout Scotland, the College Development Network and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) progressed the standardisation of complaint categories in order to enhance the opportunities for benchmarking across Colleges and sharing best practice in complaint resolution. These new categories have been implemented at the College for Session 2016/17.