

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved by:	Senior Management
Review date:	July 2019
Responsible Managers:	Assistant Principal – Learner Engagement
Group Executive Lead:	N/A
Accessible to Students/Customers:	Yes

1. Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:-

Newcastle College:	No
West Lancashire College:	No
Intraining:	No
Rathbone:	No
Newcastle Sixth Form College:	No
Kidderminster College:	Yes
Group Services	No

2. Applicability of Policy to Organisation

This policy applies to:-

Newcastle College:	No
West Lancashire College:	No
Intraining:	No
Rathbone:	No
Newcastle Sixth Form College:	No
Kidderminster College:	Yes
Group Services	No

3. Introduction

Kidderminster College is committed to providing high quality services for all our College Community. Taking account of users' views enables the College to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement.

The College operates a staged complaints procedure through which it aims to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. This document details that Complaints Procedure. A complainant may be a learner (FE or HE), prospective learner, parent, employer, or any other interested party who indicates dissatisfaction with the current level of service. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially.

Academic Appeals are not a part of this policy or procedure. Please refer to the College's FE or HE Academic Appeals Policies.

Stage 1 of the procedure differs slightly for learners and other users of the college/members of the public.

Employees or former employees should use the College's Grievance Policy and Procedure. Further details and advice on this can be obtained from Human Resources.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Kidderminster College will ensure that learners will not be treated less favourably following their complaint. If this is found to be the case, staff disciplinary procedures will be followed.
- 4.2 Kidderminster College will identify actions from complaints received to improve and develop its services.
- 4.3 Kidderminster College will ask for Equality and Diversity information, for example, Gender and Ethnicity, to help to ensure sure that all people are treated fairly.
- 4.4 A Complaints Form should be completed with as much detail as possible, but most importantly full name, date of birth and contact details. If the form is completed on behalf of a complainant, then the form must include full contact details of the complainant's representative. ***We regret that the College is unable to accept or act upon anonymous complaints.***
- 4.5 College Staff must send complaints to Learner Services to record on the Complaints Log, on the shared drive.
- 4.6 On receipt of a formal complaint by Learner Services, an Investigation Lead will be allocated within two working days of receipt. Learner Services will then liaise with the Investigation Lead to investigate the issues which have been raised. They will be provided with details so that they have all the information required to undertake the investigation effectively.
- 4.7 The College's decision will be communicated to the complainant by the College using the complainant's preferred method of contact.
- 4.8 Learner Services will continuously monitor a complaint until the issue has been resolved.
- 4.9 The complaint will be closed on the Complaint Log only when the issue has been resolved.
- 4.10 Malicious complaints received in any form will result in disciplinary action where permissible by college policies (e.g. complaints that are not true).
- 4.11 In order to help us to investigate and resolve any area of dissatisfaction, the complainant should notify the College of their concern at Stage 1 immediately and no later than 3 months of its occurrence.
- 4.12 Complaints made at Stage 2 must be made within 3 months of exhausting Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure and complaints made at Stage 3 must be made within 3 months of exhausting Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.
- 4.13 Complainants should be aware that our staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and any violent or abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.

5. Monitoring of Complaints

- 5.1 The College monitors complaints carefully. A termly report on complaints is produced and shared with the Senior Management Team, detailing issues raised, areas of study, timeliness of resolution and any subsequent actions. In addition, the College reports annually to the NCG Executive Board and annually to its Governing Body on the operation of the Complaints Procedure and the views of complainants.
- 5.2 Complaints relating to Higher Education provision are also reported on specifically to the HE Quality & Standards Committee.

6. Responsibility

- 6.1 Overall responsibility for this policy and procedure lies with the Director of Learning.
- 6.2 Day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this procedure lies with the Learner Services Manager.
- 6.3 All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve informal complaints prior to invoking the Complaints Procedure.
- 6.4 All staff have a responsibility to forward formal complaints to Learner Services, including copies of correspondence prior to being issued in response to the complainant.
- 6.5 The Lead Investigator has a duty to maintain a central file for the complaint which contains a copy of the original complaint, records of meetings, correspondence and other evidence used to resolve the complaint at Stage 2.

KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 - Informal

Learners

Rather than let an issue of concern or an area of dissatisfaction become a complaint, we hope that you will try to resolve your issue promptly by:

- raising your concerns directly with the person who, in your opinion, is responsible, or directly with your lecturer/personal tutor, or directly with the course leader or manager for your course, or;
- raising concerns through the Learner Council where you can raise general concerns or issues from groups of learners.

Once you have raised an issue of concern, the College will respond in a timely manner.

Employers

If you are dissatisfied, or have any concerns with the service provided by the College, you can raise the issue:

- directly with the Course Leader or Manager for the area;

General

If you are a member of the public, parent, ex-student or general user of the College and you are dissatisfied or have concerns about the service provided, you should in the first instance:

- raise the issue directly with the Learner Services Manager.

If you are dissatisfied with the informal resolution, then the issue should be raised formally using the College's Complaints Form.

Our feeling is that the majority of issues are capable of being resolved at Stage 1 within ten working days. If your concern is not satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, you have the opportunity to take your complaint to Stage 2 of the College Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal

The college appreciates that there may be occasions where the above process is inappropriate and that a more formal approach is necessary. Where it has not been possible to resolve matters to your satisfaction under Stage 1, you should submit your complaint to the Learner Services Manager. The Director of Learning oversees the complaints process.

You should complete a complaints form identifying both the nature of the complaint and, if appropriate, the individual against whom the complaint is being made. Any complaint against an individual will be dealt with in a confidential manner.

The complaints form is available from Learner Services or the college website.

Contact Details:

Learner Services Manager	Address	Telephone No
Helen Basnett	Kidderminster College Market Street Kidderminster Worcestershire DY10 1AB	01562 512000

Upon receipt of the Complaints Form, we will write to you and/or to your representative within 5 working days, acknowledging receipt of your complaint.

If you write to us, please outline your concerns as clearly and in as much detail as you can. Please include your name and address, dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate. You should outline any previous unsuccessful attempts at resolution and what reasonable steps should be taken to resolve the complaint.

The Learner Services Manager will approach the relevant lecturer/course co-ordinator/personal tutor/training officer/co-ordinator or service manager on your behalf.

You will receive a response within 10 working days and we will tell you how we plan to investigate and when you might expect a detailed answer. It is our aim that most complaints under Stage 2 should be resolved within 28 days. You will be informed if there is likely to be any delay in the process.

The Learner Services Manager will notify you in writing of the result of your complaint and the reasons for the decision. Alternatively, a meeting can be arranged for feedback to be given.

If your complaint is about the Learner Services Manager, you can contact the Principal via the above contact address and telephone number. The Principal will designate another manager to resolve the issue.

Stage 3 - Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your Stage 2 complaint, you have the right to escalate your complaint to Stage 3. You should put your appeal in writing, detail the reason for your dissatisfaction, what you have done to try to remedy the complaint informally and what you would like us to do next. Any complaint against an individual will be dealt with in a confidential manner.

Stage 3 appeals should be sent to the office of The Principal, Kidderminster College, Market Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1AB. You will receive a response within 10 working days and we will tell you how we plan to investigate and when you might expect a detailed answer.

Stage 4 – Learners, General and Employers

FE Learners

If your concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and you are still not happy you can appeal to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for all courses.** Before you can do this, you must have exhausted all three stages of the College's Complaints Procedure. If your concern reaches this stage, we will give you full information on how to proceed. You should note that any complaint made to the SFA must be made in writing within 3 months of exhausting the above Complaints Procedure.

The address for the SFA is:

The SFA Accounts Director
St Georges House
Kingsway
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
NE11 0NA

Senior Account Director
Skills Funding Agency
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ

Complaints received by an external funding body or arbitration service (e.g. Skills Funding Agency or Department for Work and Pensions) will be referred to the NCG Chief Executive for investigation.

HE Students

If your concern is not resolved at Stage 3 and you are still not happy, you can appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Before you can do this, you must have exhausted all three stages of the College's Complaints Procedure. If your concern reaches this stage, we will give you full information on how to proceed. You should note that any complaint made to the OIA must be made in writing within 3 months of exhausting the above Complaints Procedure.

The address for the OIA is: -

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3AB

Tel: 0118 959 9814

Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

Website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

If you are a learner, you may wish to take advice and support from Learner Services or the Student Union during the complaints process.

The contact details for the Student Union are:

Student Union
Skelmersdale Campus
College Way
Skelmerdale
Lancashire
WN8 6DX

If you are on a course validated by University of Worcester and, if, after exhausting all three stages of the College Complaints Procedure, you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to submit your complaint to the university. <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/662.htm>

Complaints made via Social Media

Please note where a complaint is received via Social Media, the College will respond advising the complainant to follow the College's Complaints Procedure.

Complaints Form

If you need help to fill in this form please ask a member of College staff.

This form can be made available in alternative formats such as large print/Braille. To request a copy in an alternative format, please contact 01562 512004

Please forward your completed form to Learner Services at:
Kidderminster College, Market Street, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 1LX

Tel: 01562 512004 **E-mail:** learnerservices@kidderminster.ac.uk **Fax:** 01562 512006

Complainant Details (This section is to be completed by all complainants)

Name:			
Address:			
			Postcode:
Telephone No.:	Mobile No.:		
Date of Birth:			
Student ID No.: (where applicable)			
E-mail:			
Course and Level: (where applicable)	Course Title:	Level:	

Representative Details (Please only complete if you are contacting us on behalf of the Complainant)

Name:			
Address:			
			Postcode:
Telephone No.:	Mobile No.:		
E-mail:			

Equality and Diversity Information (providing the following details helps us to make sure that all people are treated fairly).

Are you a							
Learner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Age (Please tick)										
Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-18	<input type="checkbox"/>	19-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	25+	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Mode of Attendance (Please tick)										
Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Place	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Complaints Form

Disability					Gender						
Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ethnicity										
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	White	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>									

Preferred contact details (please tick/indicate)
Please contact me by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> e-mail <input type="checkbox"/> in writing <input type="checkbox"/>

Please contact **my representative** by telephone e-mail in writing

Details of your complaint:

Please clearly identify the nature of your complaint and what has been done to attempt to resolve the complaint so far.

Signed:

Date:

Data Protection Act 1998

The College has a duty to protect the personal data it processes. To comply with this legislation, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any person unlawfully as outlined in our Data Protection Policy, a copy of which can be obtained from the Data Protection Officer. Use of personal data contained within this form will only be used for its intended purpose and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. We will not release any personal information to third party organisations without your prior, written consent.