



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

COMPLAINTS HANDLING REPORT QUARTER 1, 22-23

Performance Team

November 2022



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Complaints Handling Report Quarter 1 2022-2023

1. The Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of our quarter one performance in handling complaints effectively, resolving complaints in a timely manner and identifying areas for improvement when our service is found to be below expectation.

2. Background to the Report

The College is required to comply with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) complaints handling procedure and we are required to publish on a quarterly basis information on complaints outcomes and actions taken to improve services. The college must also publish an annual complaints performance report on its website in line with the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure and also as part of our duties under Freedom of Information legislation. This analysis includes statistics showing the volume and type of complaint as well as key performance details.

3. The Report

The report covers the period 1st August 2022 to 31st October 2022. In this period there were 8 frontline complaints (Stage 1) and 12 complaints requiring a full investigation (Stage 2). One complaint was escalated to Stage 2.

Indicator One: The total number of complaints received

2	Quantitative Indicator	
	Number of complaints received	20
	Number of complaints received per 100 population as a %	0.93%

Breakdown of Complaints	Quantity
Stage 1 Number of complaints received	8
Stage 2 Number of complaints received	12
Stage 1 Number of complaints escalated to Stage 2	1

Breakdown of Complaint Categories	Quantity
Stage 1	
Applications, Admission, Progression	3
Course Related	1
Services	3
Facilities	1

Stage 2	
Applications, Admission, Progress	7
Course related	5
Escalated Complaint	
Applications, Admission, Progression	1

Indicator Two: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days

3	Quantitative Indicator	No.	%
3.1	Number of complaints closed in full at stage 1 within five working days as % of all stage 1 complaints responded to in full	3	38%
3.2	The number of complaints closed in full at stage 2 within 20 working days as % of all stage 2 complaints responded to in full *	6	50%
3.3	The number of complaints closed in full after escalation within 20 working days as % of all complaints responded to in full after escalation.	1	100%

*Two Stage 2 complaints were open at the time of reporting

Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

Quantitative Indicator		Average time in working days
4.1	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1	6.38 days
4.2	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2	15.58 days
4.3	Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	9 days

Indicator Four: The outcome of complaints at each stage

	Quantitative Indicator	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Resolved**
5.1	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed at stage 1 <i>1 complaint escalated to Stage 2</i>	3 (43%)	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	3 (43%)
5.2	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed at stage 2 <i>Two complaints open at time of reporting</i>	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	6 (50%)
5.3	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed after escalation	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

**A complaint is resolved when both (the organisation) and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld

Learning from complaints: Service delivery improvements

Service delivery improvements

By recording and analysing complaints data we can identify and address the causes of complaints and, where appropriate, identify training opportunities and introduce service improvements.

Following complaints received in Academic Year 2022–23, Quarter 1, service delivery will be improved in the following areas:

👉 Course related – Environmental/Resources

Students expressed dissatisfaction with space allocation for creative industries courses following the move from Level 2 to the Mezzanine area. To address some of the points raised signage was to be increased to identify quiet study areas and accessible toilets. Traffic management to be implemented to direct staff and students away from learning spaces. Students to be provided with updates from the Estates team as the works progress.

Customer satisfaction with complaints process

To ensure compliance with the College Complaints Handling Procedure we request feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with the service they received, and not the circumstances or outcome of their actual complaint. They are asked to evaluate the service considering the following points:

- Whether the complaints process was easy to access
- Whether they received a prompt acknowledgement of their complaint
- Whether they were dealt with courteously at all times
- Whether their complaint was thoroughly investigated
- Whether they received a fair and clear response and within an appropriate timescale

In Quarter 1, 2022-23 6 complainants (33%) provided feedback on their satisfaction of the service provided, their responses are indicated in the table below:

Complaint Handling Point	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found the complaints process easy to access	17%	50%	33%	0%
I received a prompt acknowledgement of my complaint	17%	50%	33%	0%
I was dealt with courteously at all times	17%	83%	0%	0%
I found my complaint was thoroughly investigated	17%	50%	17%	17%
I received a fair and clear response to my complaint, within an appropriate timescale	17%	50%	33%	0%

For the most part, the above responses demonstrate that complainants are in agreement overall with the handling of their complaint, However, as always, there are still improvements to be made, particularly in relation to ensuring that complainants are provided with a full and thorough response, which addresses all aspects of their complaint.

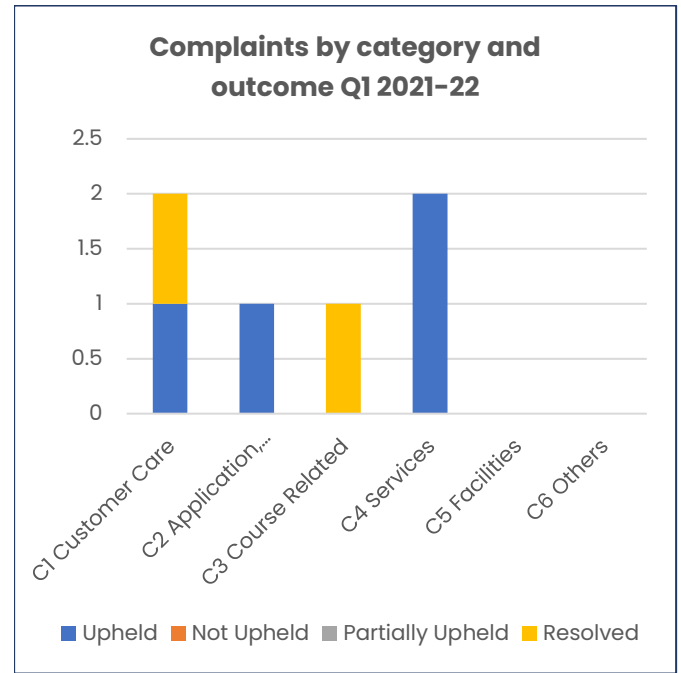
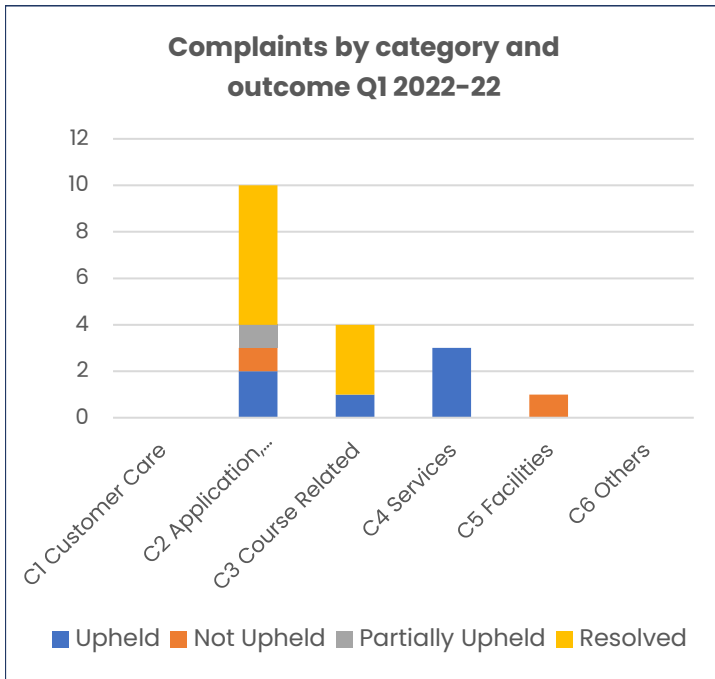
As a complainant had noted dissatisfaction with all areas of the complaints handling process a follow-up email was issued asking for feedback on how their complaint could have been handled differently. At the time of reporting no response had been received. Any feedback from the complainant will be considered and used to improve service delivery where possible.

Key Observations

On comparison to Quarter 1 in Session 21-22 there has been an increase in the number of both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints. This may be attributable to students returning to campus. Four Stage 1 complaints were related to transport and catering provision. The complaint categories are comparable:

Session	No. of Stage 1 complaints received Q1	No. of Stage 2 complaints received Q1	Complaint Categories
2022-2023	8	12	<u>Stage 1</u> Applications, Admission, Progression Course Related Services Facilities <u>Stage 2</u> Customer Care Applications, Admission, Progression Course Related
2021-2022	5	1	<u>Stage 1</u> Customer Care Applications, Admission, Progression Services Course related <u>Stage 2.</u> Customer Care

Complaint Category and Outcomes Comparison Q1 22-23 v 21-22



Response Times

The average time in working days to respond to complaints at Stage 1 was 6.38 days which is over the SPSO 5 day target.

A LearnNet Complaints unit is being developed and all staff will be required to complete this either as new training or as a refresher. It is anticipated that this training will raise awareness of the complaints handling process and in particular the requirement to adhere to the timescales for actioning complaints and ensure compliance with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman performance indicators. If this proves to be successful, all staff will be required to undertake this training each session.

The Stage 2 complaints average response time (15.58 days) is above the SPSO 20 day target, as is the response time for the escalated complaint (9 days).

SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman)

SPSO informed Dumfries and Galloway College that they had been asked to review one complaint handled by us during Quarter 4, 2021-2022. SPSO felt that the College response had been reasonable and that there was no evidence to demonstrate any fault or failure in how the complaint was handled, therefore they did not take the complaint forward.

The Performance Team, November 2022