

# COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2023-24

Overall responsibility:	Deputy Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal for Teaching, Learning and Quality
Date issued:	June 2023
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Endorsed and approved by Policy & Strategy Group

Date June 2023



Pat Brennan-Barrett

Principal

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The College welcomes compliments, concerns and complaints from all members of the College community and from the general public. It will use this process to improve its service to its students and the wider communities in which it exists.

# 2. RESPONSIBILITY

Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal of Quality, Teaching & Learning

# 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and visitors to the College, including contractors working on the College site.

# 4. POLICY STATEMENT

Northampton College is committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides.

It is also recognised that there are many instances where we deliver exceptional service and compliments are welcome. Good practice will be shared across the College teams.

We realise that, occasionally, mistakes will be made, or the service offered will not meet an individual's requirements or expectations. However, we anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff.

It is the College policy that all complaints made against the College or the services it offers should be:

- Treated seriously and in an open manner.
- Acknowledged within two teaching days in writing.
- Investigated by a manager.
- Resolved, wherever it is reasonably practicable, within three teaching weeks.
- Used as feedback to improve the serve which the College offers.

# 5. KEY PRINCIPLES

- The College expects that every effort will be made to resolve the issue locally through discussion and agreed actions in the first instance. Where this is not possible or does not result in satisfactory resolution the complaint should be submitted to the Quality Office.
- The College usually expects complaints to be made by the person concerned. However, it will consider complaints made by a student's parent or advocate. To comply with the Data Protection Act permission will be sought if the complainant is over 18.
- The Quality Office will send the complaint to the relevant manager who will respond via an appropriate channel explaining what has happened as a result of the complaint. Where this involves a member of staff, specific detail of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that our employees are afforded appropriate dignity at work.
- Compliments, concerns and complaints can be made by email, post or by completing one of the *"Tell us how we're doing"* forms provided by the College reception.

- All compliments, concerns and complaints will be fed into the Course Review system for discussion and actions if appropriate.
- Compliments, concerns and complaints will be reported to appropriate College groups on a termly basis.

## 6. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Stage 1 – Informal

If you have a complaint, you should take it up in the first instance with the member of staff directly concerned. This is often best done verbally and informally, although you may present your complaint in writing if you wish.

When a complaint is received in the Quality Office either written, email or via a telephone call, it will be assessed as to who is the best person to handle the complaint and they will be asked to deal with it. This will normally be the manager of the particular school or department involved in the complaint.

Informal procedures endeavour to stop problems before they develop into more serious issues and offer a swifter solution for all parties.

Where the issues raised affect a number of students, those students can submit a complaint as a group complaint. In such circumstances, in order to manage the progression of the complaint, we may ask the group to nominate one student to act as a group representative. Northampton College may deal with the representative only and expect the representative to liaise with the rest of the group.

The manager will attempt to resolve the issue by exploring the complaint and relaying the outcome back to the complainant.

The Quality Office will record the complaint and the outcome in the Informal Complaints Log.

All complaints will be reviewed termly by the Quality Office who will be identifying any themes that are emerging or procedures/systems that need reviewing.

Most complaints do not progress beyond this initial stage. However, if a complainant is still unhappy with the outcome and a further complaint is received, the formal stage can be evoked.

### Stage 2 – Formal

A formal complaint is normally appropriate when initial attempts have failed (see above), or the situation is deemed to be serious. Formal complaints must be made in writing either by email, letter, or the Complaints Form in Appendix B.

When a formal complaint is received in the Quality Office it is logged and a letter of acknowledgment is sent to the complainant within five teaching days.

It is important that the details listed are as follows:

- Your name (a complaint will not be investigated if it is anonymous)
- How you may be contacted
- The general nature of your complaint
- The specific substance of your complaint (including names, dates and documentary evidence where relevant)
- Details of the action you have taken under the informal stage, and the outcome, reason for your dissatisfaction and any proposals you may have for its satisfactory resolution.

The complaint will be referred to the appropriate manager who will investigate the complaint. Once an investigation is completed the complainant will receive a final written response from the assigned manager with a copy sent to the Quality Office within three teaching weeks informing them of the outcome. (This may take longer in non-term time, or the investigation may take longer to resolve).

### **Stage 3 – Review**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from Stage 2, Stage 3 of the procedure may be instigated within ten working days of the outcome at Stage 2.

A request for review may be brought under the following limited grounds:

- A review of the procedures followed at Stage 2
- A consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable; or
- New material evidence which the complainant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The appropriate Assistant Principal will review the complaint but will not usually consider the issues afresh or undertake further investigation unless new material evidence is submitted. The Assistant Principal will respond in writing within three teaching weeks with a copy to the Quality Office.

### **Stage 4 – Appeal**

In exceptional circumstances the complaint may be elevated to the Deputy Principal. This appeal must be made in writing to the Quality Office within fifteen working days of the decision at Stage 3. The appeal must state why the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the decision at Stage 3. Any decision made at this stage is final.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) may be contacted if you feel the complaint has not been resolved.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>

If you are a Higher Education student and do not feel that your complaint has been resolved, you may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

## **7. Reporting**

A report on compliments, concerns and complaints received will be presented to Policy & Strategy Group termly.

## **8. Associated Policies**

- Staff Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Admissions Policy and Procedures

## **9. Approval Process**

- Policy & Strategy Group
- Corporation

- Principal

## **10. Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Complaints Process Summary

Appendix 2: Complaints Form

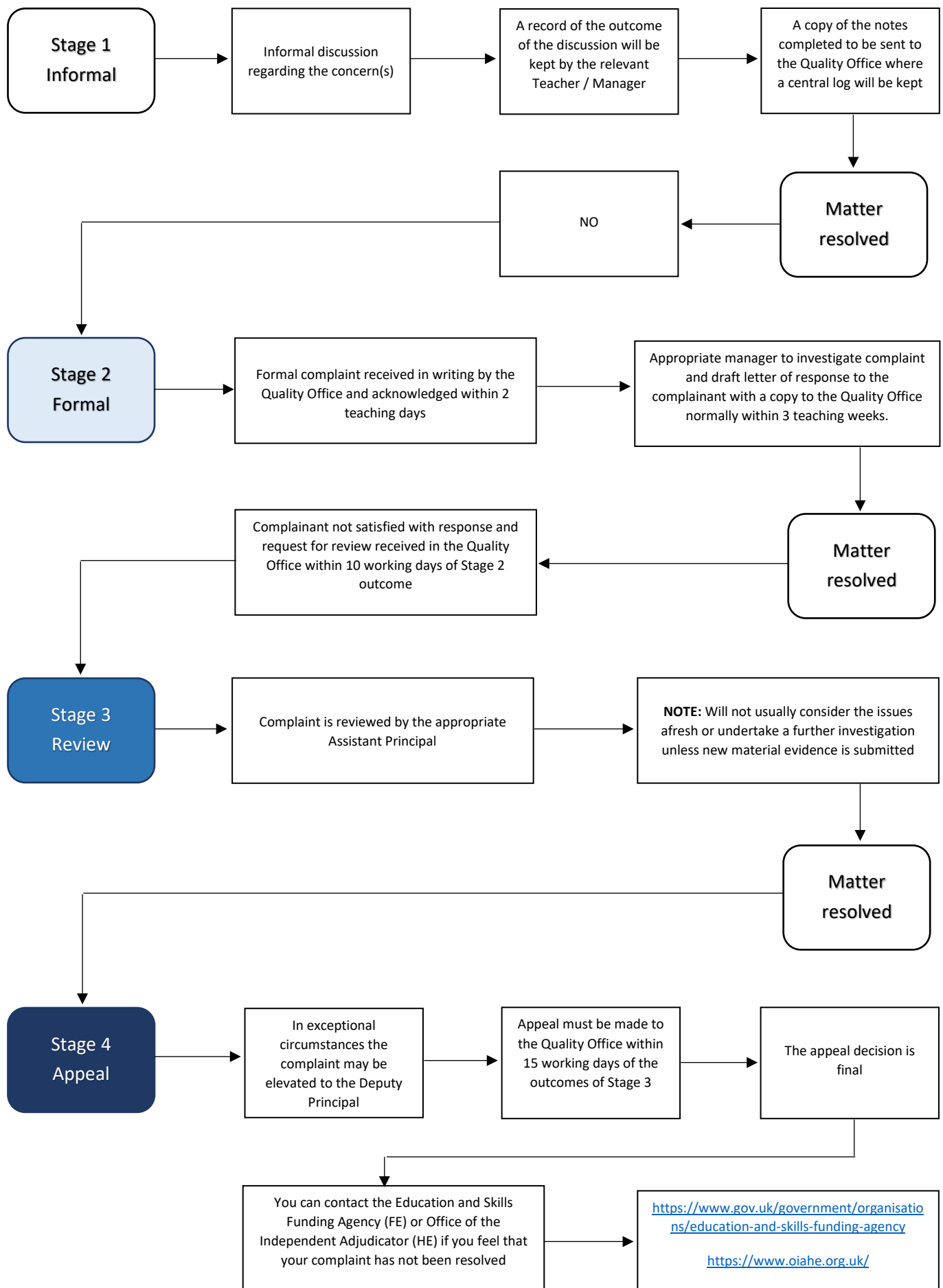
Appendix 3: Request for Review Form

Appendix 4: Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment

Appendix 5: Data Protection Impact Assessment

Appendix 6: Communications Plan

## Appendix 1: Complaints Process Summary



## Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Northampton College is committed to providing high quality services and we welcome feedback to help us achieve this. Please complete this form, including as much information as possible. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Address:</b>
<b>Course:</b>		
<b>Tel. No:</b>		<b>Email address:</b>
<b>Please set out clearly the nature and origin of your complaint:</b> (Please continue overleaf in necessary and include documentary evidence where relevant)		
<b>Please detail the steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally including the outcome and reason for your dissatisfaction:</b> (Please continue overleaf if necessary)		
<b>Please describe what we can do to resolve the matter:</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>

Please return your completed form to the Quality Office via the College reception, by email ([complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk)) or by post (Booth Lane, Northampton, NN3 3RF)

## Appendix 3: Request for Review Form

This form is to be completed in accordance with Stage 3 of the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and should be submitted to the Quality Office via the College reception, by email ([complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk)) or by post (Booth Lane, Northampton, NN3 3RF).

Please do not complete this form unless you have completed Stages 1 and 2 of the procedure.

A complaint will not be investigated if this form has not been completed in full or if it is anonymous.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Course:</b>		
<b>Tel. No:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>Grounds for Review</b> A request for review may be made on limited grounds, including but not confined to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the procedures followed at the formal stage;</li> <li>• Consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances; or</li> <li>• There is new material evidence which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.</li> </ul> <p>The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.</p>		
<b>Grounds for Appeal:</b> (Please tick as appropriate)	<b>A procedural irregularity</b>	
	<b>The outcome was unreasonable</b>	
	<b>There is new material evidence available</b>	
<b>Please explain your grounds for appeal, how you have been disadvantaged by this and list the evidence to support your grounds.</b> Include reasons why you did not submit this at an earlier stage. Continue overleaf if necessary.		
<b>Please state your preferred outcome:</b>		
<b>Declaration:</b> <i>"I declare that the information given in this form is true to the best of my knowledge and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary."</i>		
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	

## Appendix 4: Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment

This form should be used by managers and policy authors within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments (E&DIAs) in relation to protected characteristics, specifically: Age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity and marriage & civil partnership.

The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; formal and informal, internal and external.

The Impact Assessment may be carried out on any policy, service, function or plan you are engaged in, or are about to commence. All policies should be clearly stated. However, in reality, some policies are built into everyday procedures and customs, therefore not all policies are open to inspection and review. Any assessment of a policy should include these customs and practices as well as the formal written policy. 'Functions' means your duties and powers and includes internal and external functions, including service delivery.

Policy Details	
What is the policy?	Compliments, Concerns and Complaints
Is it new or existing?	Existing
Department	Quality
Policy Author (Postholder title, name)	Jenny Thorpe – Assistant Principal of Teaching, Learning & Quality
Author of Equality Analysis	Jenny Thorpe
Date of completion	12/6/23

Aim and Objectives
Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the policy:
To improve the College's service to its students and the wider communities in which it exists.

Policy Assessment				
Consider whether your policy might have an impact on various groups identified within the categories listed below and explain why you have reached this conclusion. Please tick (✓) the identified level of impact (positive, negative, or no impact) and provide details of your findings.				
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Findings
Race	X			
Religion and/or belief	X			
Sex (Gender)	X			
Gender Identity	X			
Disability	X			
Age	X			
Sexual orientation	X			
Marriage and/or civil partnership	X			
Pregnancy and/or maternity (including surrogacy and adoption)	X			
Other identified group (e.g., carers)	X			

<b>Action Planning</b>		
How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?	If a positive impact is identified, how do you intend to promote or develop this opportunity?	Where negative impact has been identified, can it be justified? If so, explain how.
N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Monitor and Review</b>	
How will you monitor the impact of your policy once it has been put into effect?	
This policy will be monitored through regular reporting to the College's Policy and Strategy Group.	
Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):	
Name	
Mark Owen	Assistant Principal - Student Services
Jan Hutt	Vice Principal – HR and Student Services
Ashok Dave	Head of ICT Services

Equality Analysis Sign-Off Signature and Date:	<i>Jenny Thorpe</i>
Review Date:	June 2023

## Appendix 5: Data Protection Impact Assessment

### Data Protection Impact Assessment

#### Does this Policy

- require the collection and use of data in addition that normally collected by the College?

**No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 1)**

- require the sharing of data with partners?

**No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 2)**

1. Is additional data being collected? If so, please detail:

No

Is data collected personal and/or sensitive?

How will you collect, use, store and delete data?

2. Will you be sharing data with anyone? Please detail what data, with who and confirm a **Data Sharing Agreement** is in place

No

**Describe the purposes of the processing / sharing:** What are the benefits of the processing/ sharing – for you, and more broadly?

n/a

**Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders:** describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it is not appropriate to do so.

n/a

**Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:**  
What is your lawful basis for processing?

n/a

How will you ensure data quality and data minimisation?

n/a

What information will you give individuals?

n/a

Please attach a Risk Assessment if there are significant risks to data protection.

**Signed by Data Protection Officer**

Name: Julian Wood

Date: June 2023

## Appendix 6: Communications Plan

<b>TITLE OF COLLEGE POLICY:</b> Compliments, Concerns and Complaints	<b>DATE APPROVED BY:</b> Policy & Strategy Group or Corporation <b>Date:</b>
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<b>AUDIENCE (select appropriate with ✓)</b>					
Managers	✓	Curriculum teams	✓	Business Support teams	✓
All staff	✓	Suppliers		Partners	
Other - Students	✓				

<b>CHANNEL (select appropriate with ✓)</b>					
<b>Policy &amp; Strategy Team (PST)</b>		<b>Quality Improvement Network (QIN)</b>		<b>Marketing team</b>	
Meeting	✓	Meeting	✓	Website	✓
<b>Individual team</b>		<b>Suppliers</b>		<b>Partners</b>	
Document Library	✓	Website ✓		Website	✓
Team meeting	✓				
<b>College Management Team (CMT)</b>		<b>JCNC</b>		<b>CORPORATION</b>	
Meeting	✓	Email	✓	Meeting	✓
Email	✓				

<b>COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ACTIVATED BY:</b>		
<b>Name:</b> Jenny Thorpe <b>Department:</b> Quality	<b>Job title:</b> Assistant Principal of Teaching, Learning & Quality	<b>Date:</b> June 2023