

## POLICY STATEMENT

**TITLE:**

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

**INTRODUCTION/  
OVERVIEW:**

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.

**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 service which the College offers

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

**QUALITY STATEMENTS:**

- 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 e-mail, post or by completing one of the "Tell us how we are 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

**LINKED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Grievance Policy</li> <li>• Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and procedures</li> <li>• Admissions Policy and procedures</li> </ul> |
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**MONITORING PROCEDURE:**

A report on compliments, concerns and complaints received will be presented to SMT termly.

**DATE FOR REVIEW AND NEXT DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

July 2019

**RESPONSIBILITY: Overall (Directorate/Dept): Implementation:**

Deputy Principal

**ENDORSED BY:**

	<b>(Signature)</b>
<b>Policy &amp; Strategy Group/Corporation</b>	<b>(Position)</b>
	<b>(Date)</b>

**APPROVED:**

	<b>(Signature)</b>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>(Position)</b>
<b>14.11.18</b>	<b>(Date)</b>

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A:	Complaints flowchart
Appendix B:	Complaints Form
Appendix C:	Request for Review Form

# **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 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 e mail, 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 acknowledgement 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<sup>1</sup>.

### **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**

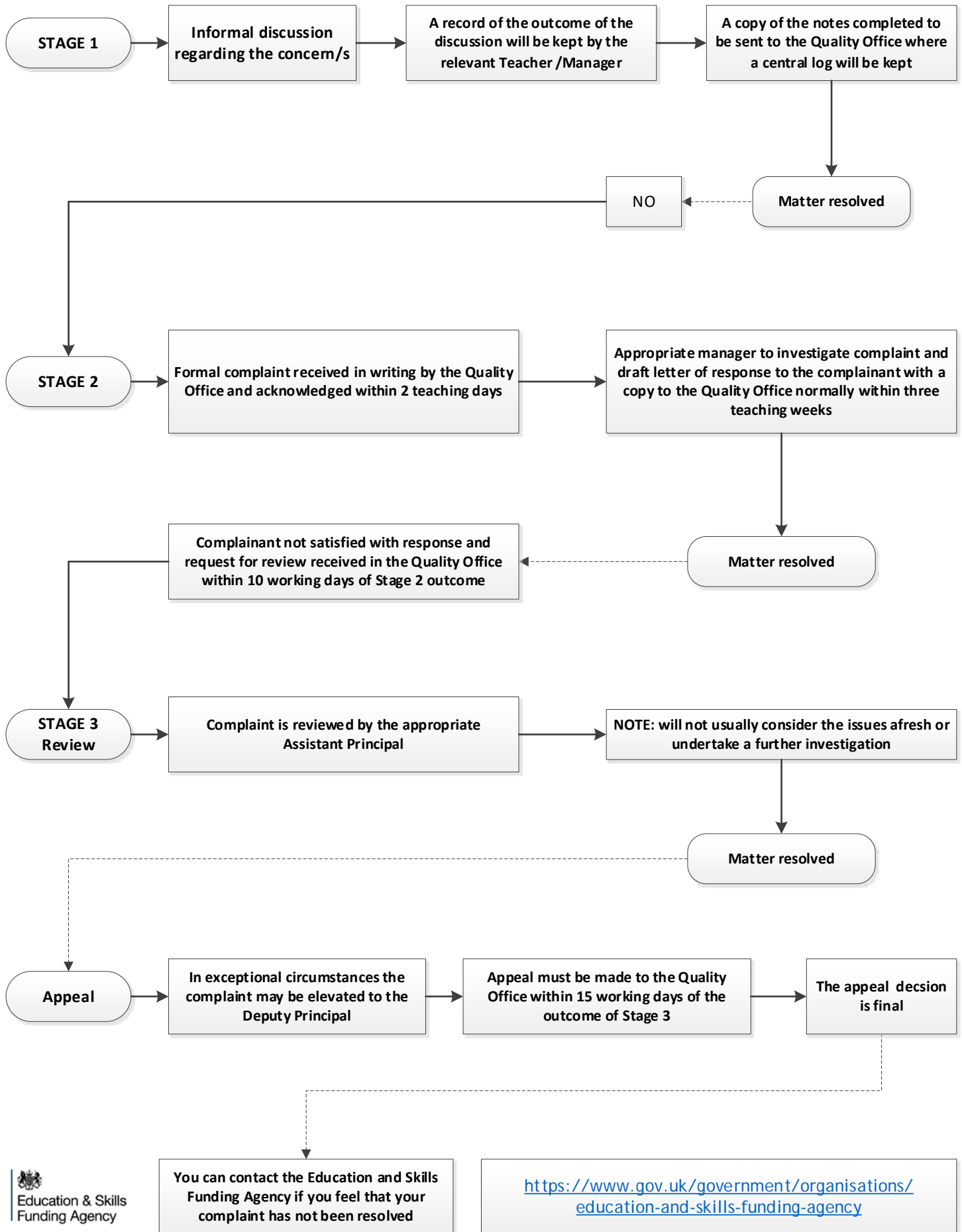
In exceptional circumstances the complaint may be elevated to the Deputy Principal. This appeal must be made in writing to the Quality Office within fifteen working days of the decision at Stage 3. The appeal must state why the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the decision at stage 3.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

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<sup>1</sup> This may take longer in non-term time or the investigation may take longer to resolve



## Appendix B: 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.

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

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

## Appendix C: 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 ([qualityteam@northamptoncollege.ac.uk](mailto:qualityteam@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.

Name:	Address:	
Course :		
Tel. No.:	Email address:	
<p><b>Grounds for Review</b></p> <p>A request for review may be made on limited grounds, including but not confined to:</p> <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>		
<p><b>Grounds for Appeal:</b>  (Please tick as appropriate)</p>	A procedural irregularity	
	The outcome was unreasonable	
	There is new material evidence available	
<p><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</p>		
<p>Please state your preferred outcome</p>		
<p><b>Declaration</b> 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.</p>		
Signature:	Date:	

# Complaints Procedure

## Appendix A

### 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.

#### 1. Name of policy

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

#### 2. What is the aim(s), objective(s) and/or purpose of the policy?

To improve the College's service to its students and the wider communities in which it exists.

#### 3. Who is the policy lead?

Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality

#### 4. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy? (Tick all that apply)

Learners                       Staff                       Wider community

#### 5. Team

Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):

Name	Position
Jenny Thorpe	Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality
Mark Owen	Student Services Manager
Hilary Letts	Quality Improvement Lead

Date E&DIA undertaken: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018

E&DIA undertaken as a result of:  
Renewal / Revision of Policy / Procedure

Date of last E&DIA (if applicable) 7/12/18

#### 6. Complaints?

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided? If yes then please give details. No

n/a



## 7. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

1. **Positive impact** – Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
2. **None or little impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics.
3. **Some impact** – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristics is likely to be greater than on another.
4. **Substantial impact** – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Using the guidance provided above, complete the following table:

Sex/Age	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Women	√			
Men	√			
Age	√			

Disability	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Visually impaired	√			
Hearing impaired	√			
Physical disability	√			
Specific Learning difficulties	√			
Global learning difficulties	√			
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	√			
Any other disability - various	√			

Race	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
White	√			
Other minority groups	√			

Other Protected Characteristics	Positive impact	No or little impact	Some adverse impact	Substantial adverse impact
Religion and Belief	√			
Sexual Orientation	√			
Gender Reassignment	√			
Pregnancy & Maternity	√			

Marriage & Civil Partnership	√			
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Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the attached action plan.

n/a

**8. Is there anything that cannot be changed?**

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
n/a		

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility. (Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

None required

DISTRIBUTION: Copies of the final E&DIA should be sent to:

- Jan Hutt - Director of HR
- Patrick Leavey - Deputy Principal – Teaching, Learning & Success
- Quality Improvement Team Administrator

**And** to those whom this Impact Assessment will cause to have further work to do in either changing processes or re-writing the policy(s) concerned.

All actions recorded here should be carried forward into your QIP, so that actions can be monitored and evaluated to measure the impact. There will be random sampling of action plans through the Equality & Diversity Forum.

## APPENDIX B

### COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

<b>TITLE OF COLLEGE POLICY:</b> Compliments, Concerns and Complaints	<b>DATE APPROVED BY</b> <b>Policy &amp; Strategy Group Or Corporation</b>  <b>Date:</b>
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<b>AUDIENCE (select appropriate with √)</b>					
Managers	√	Curriculum teams	√	Business Support teams	√
All staff	√	Suppliers		Partners	
Other (please state)	√	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 Team meeting	√ √	Website	√	Website	√
<b>College Management Team (CMT)</b>		<b>JCNC</b>		<b>CORPORATION</b>	
Meeting Email	√ √	Email	√	Meeting	√

<b>COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ACTIVATED BY:</b>		
<b>Name:</b> Jenny Thorpe	<b>Job title:</b> Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning & Quality	<b>Date:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2018