Annual Complaints Handling Report

2023/2024

With Scottish Public Service Ombusman Key Performance Indicators

1. Introduction

South Lanarkshire College operates its complaints handling procedures in line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO). In addition to publishing the four mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the College demonstrates its commitment to the complaints handling process by reporting quarterly to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) committee of the Board of Management (BOM) on the KPIs, complaint trends and any actions taken to improve service delivery.

2. Context

The College complaints handling process aims to provide a streamlined process for responding to complaints early and locally. Wherever possible the College will always try to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the customer. If this is not possible the customer will be given a clear response to each of the points raised in their complaint.

The complaint stages are:

- stage 1 for issues that are straightforward and require little or no investigation;
- stage 2 for issues that are complex and require investigation or where the customer is not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1; and
- The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman where the customer is not satisfied with the stage 2 response from the College.

There are four categories of outcome for a complaint:

- resolved (the complaint is neither held or not upheld);
- partially upheld (where some of the complaint is upheld)
- upheld (where the College is at fault); and
- not upheld (where the College is not at fault).

3. 2023-2024 Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: KPI 1 the total number of complaints received at stage 1, escalated complaints and the complaints received directly at stage 2 and as a % of the complaints received.

Complaint Indicator	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Yearly Total	
The number of complaints received	6		7		13		2		28	
College population and the % of complaints received per 100 population	3,237	0.18%	3,756	0.19%	3890	0.33%	3,894	0.05%	3,894	0.7%

Table 2: KPI 2: The total number of complaints received that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days.

Complaint Indicator	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Yearly Total	
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed in full within the set timescales of five days.	4	100%	6	100%	10	100%	2	100%	22	100%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed in full within the set timescales of 10 days when an extension has been granted.	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed in full within the set timescales of 20 days.	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2	100%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 after escalation and % of total closed in full within the set timescales of 20 days.	0	0%	1	100%	2	100%	0	0%	3	100%

Table 3 KPI 3: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

Complaint Indicator	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Yearly Total
Average time in working days to respond in full at stage 1	4	5	3	3	3.75
Average time in working days to respond in full at stage 2	15	15	13	0	14

Table 4: KPI 4 the number of complaints resolved, partially upheld, upheld and not upheld at each stage and the % of complaints closed at each stage.

Complaint Indicator	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Yearly Total	
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	1	20%	1	17%	1	10%	0	0%	3	13%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	3	60%	0	0%	3	30%	0	0%	6	26%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	1	20%	4	67%	6	60%	2	100%	13	57%
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	1	100%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	2	40%
20%Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	0	0%	1	100%	2	66%	0	0%	3	60%

4. Category of complaints received, and actions taken to improve.

Table 5: The category of complaints received by quarter.

Complaint Category	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Yearly Total
Customer Care	1	2	5	0	8
Applications to Progression	1	1	4	1	7
Course Related	3	4	3	0	10
Services	1	0	1	0	2
Facilities	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	1	1

Table 6: The number of complaints received within each category and the % of total complaints received.

Customer Care	Number Received	% of Total Complaints
Health & Safety		
Security		
Diversity & Equality		
Data Protection	1	4%
Environmental	1	4%
Staff Conduct	6	21%
Student Conduct		
Other		
Applications to progression	**Number Received**	**% of Total Complaints**
Marketing		
Interview, enrolment, induction		
Articulation, withdrawal	7	25%
Other		

Course Related	Number Received	% of Total Complaints
Learning and Teaching		
Environment. Resources		
Course Management	10	36%
Learning and Support		
Assessment and Certification		
Other		
Services	**Number Received**	**% of Total Complaints**
Finance	1	4%
Funding/Bursary		
Student Records		
Learning Support		
Library/Learning Technology	1	4%
Quality		
Other		
Facilities	**Number Received**	**% of Total Complaints**
Catering		
Maintenance and Car Parking		
Others	**Number Received**	**% of Total Complaints**
	1	4%

Table 7: Actions Taken to Improve

Category of Complaint	Actions Taken to Improve
Customer Care 8 received 1 partially upheld 2 upheld 5 not upheld	Staff received support from their line manager in managing and reducing stressful situations. Staff were reminded to recognise that sensitive discussions with students should be supportive and to confirm with students that they fully understand the content of the discussion. Candidates were informed that interviews for courses will be conducted by a lecturer out with the Advice Centre
Applications to Progression 7 received 7 not upheld	Course teams were reminded of the importance of clear communication with students regarding attendance and progression. The curriculum area has implemented a system to ensure that students receive consistent advice on recruitment and progression.
Course Related 10 received 1 resolved 4 partially upheld 2 upheld 3 not upheld	The curriculum areas will, wherever possible, adopt a consistent approach to class cover during periods of lecturer absence. The curriculum area will enhance the interview procedure for blended learning courses to ensure that students are fully informed about the course delivery and requirements. An introduction to teams has been included within course inductions. A formal communication process has been introduced to notify students when results are put on hold by an awarding body. The process of notifying students about the decision to merge classes has been reviewed to ensure students are informed promptly once a decision is made. The College has introduced a standardised communication to notify students when results are delayed due to Action Short of Strike. Lecturers were reminded to provide clear notes to students following guidance meetings.
Services 2 received 2 upheld	A review of payment methods has been conducted to simplify the system for the payment of student fees. A centralized room booking system is required to maximise room usage across the College
Other 1 received not upheld	

5. Complaint Trends

Table 8: Number of complaints received by % of population.

	Number and % of complaints received	Number and % of complaints resolved	Number and % of complaints partially upheld	Number and % of complaints upheld	Number and % of complaints not upheld
2023-2024	28 (0.7%	1 (4%)	5 (18%)	6 (21%)	16 (57%)
2022-2023	10 (0.18%)	n/a	n/a	1 (10%)	9 (90%)
2021-2022	23 (0.4%)	n/a	n/a	13 (57%)	10 (43%)

Table 9 Category of complaints received per % of 100 population.

	2023-2024 (3984)	20222-2023 (5505)	2021/2022 (5996)
Customer Care	8 received (0.2%) 3 partial upheld or upheld (0.08%) 5 not upheld (0.12%)	5 received (0.09%) 0 upheld 5 not upheld (0.09%)	7 received (0.12%) 5 upheld (0.08%) 2 not upheld (0.03%)
Applications to Progression	7 received (0.18%) 7 not upheld (0.18%)	1 (0.02%) 1 not upheld (0.02%)	5 received (0.08%) 5 upheld
Course Related	10 received (0.25%) 1 resolved (0.03%) 6 partial upheld or upheld (0.15%) 3 not upheld (0.08%)	2 received (0.04%) 2 not upheld (0.04%)	5 received (0.08% 0 upheld 5 upheld
Services	2 received (0.05%) 2 upheld	2 (0.04%) 1 upheld (0.02%) 1 not upheld (0.02%)	6 received (0.1%) 3 upheld (0.05%) 3 not upheld (0.05%)
Facilities	0	0	0
Other	1 received (0.03%) 1 not upheld (0.03%)	0	0

6. Customer satisfaction with complaints

The College requests formal feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with the complaints process. In 20023-2024, two complainants provided feedback. One expressed satisfaction with the outcome, while the other disagreed with the response.

6. Actions

All actions from the 2022-2023 Annual Complaints Handling Report were successfully completed.

Table10: 2024-2025 Action Plan

Action	Lead	Target Date
Publish the 2023-2024 Annual Complaints Handling Report on the College website following its presentation to, and approval by, the Senior Leadership Team, the Learning Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSE) and the Board of Management (BOM)	Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler)	November 2024
Present to the SLT and the LTSE Committee quarterly the number of complaints, outcomes, lessons learned and the progress of actions prior to publication on the College website	Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler	November 2024 February 2025 June 2025 August 2025
Review the *Complaints Handling: A Guide for Staff* document	Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler)	March 2024
Review and update the *Making a Complaint to the College* leaflet	Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler)	January 2025
Create an Acceptable Engagement Policy for approval by SLT, LTSE and the BOM prior to publishing on the staff portal and college website	Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler)	November 2024

Update the College online system for reporting and recording complaints	Head of MIS Depute Head of Curriculum (Complaints Handler)	January 2025