

**POLICY**

<b>TITLE:</b>	Compliments and Complaints Policy
<b>AIM:</b>	To provide an effective procedure for learners and other service users to provide feedback on College provision
<b>RELATED POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES:</b>	Academic Appeals Policy
<b>DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:</b>	
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	College Executive Team Quality Standards Committee
<b>DATE OF APPROVAL:</b>	June 2019
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>	June 2022
<b>DISTRIBUTION:</b>	All staff via the College intranet Available on request from Learner Services to learners, parents and the public
<b>VERSION CONTROL:</b>	Previously approved June 2015
<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE:</b>	Assistant Principal: Information, Planning, Learner Experience, Inclusion and Curriculum Operations

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT		
Phase 1 Initial Screening completed	<b>Date:</b>	9 September 2010
Phase 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Not required</b>	<i>(please tick if appropriate)</i>
Full impact assessment completed/ not required	<b>Completed on (if applicable):</b>	

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## **STATEMENT OF INTENT/SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This Policy explains how members of the community which the College serves including learners, parents, carers, guardians and employers can complain about the service provided by the College and the procedure which will be followed in responding to those complaints. The Policy also sets out the arrangements for the handling of compliments.

The College Mission Statement sets out the College's commitment to provide access to the, "highest quality education and skills training to meet the needs of individual, employers and the communities we serve".

The objectives of the Compliments and Complaints Policy are to provide;

- A rapid, open process which is fair to complainants and staff alike
- A procedure designed to resolve problems and satisfy concerns promptly
- A thorough investigation into complaints received
- Improvement to services to learners and the quality of provision by acting promptly in response to feedback received and the recommendations made following the investigation of complaints
- Structured recording, monitoring and reporting of complaints

Matters relating to the assessment and or grading of a learners work are not within the scope of this policy, the Academic Appeals Policy is the relevant policy.

Training and Development will be agreed, where appropriate, to assist in delivering this policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Assistant Principal: Information, Planning, Learner Experience, Inclusion and Curriculum Operations is responsible for the policy, for ensuring that the College responds to compliments and complaints in accordance with the procedures set out within the policy and for ensuring that complaints and compliments are reported regularly.

The Client Services and Enrichment Manager is responsible for the administration of compliments and complaints and for maintaining records of those compliments and complaints received.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY**

This policy reflects sector best practice regarding complaints and praise as well as the standards set out within the Customer Service Excellence Quality Standard, for which the lead organisation is the Cabinet Office, to which the College is accredited.

For further education the policy reflects the Education and Skills Funding Agency guidance relating to the management of complaints and the arrangements for appeals including the right of appeal to the relevant funding agency when the College's procedure has been exhausted. Further information relating to the guidance provided by each of the funding agencies can be found on the relevant agency's website or, alternatively, is available upon request from the College.

For higher education the policy reflects the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals. The College is a member of the Independent Adjudicator Scheme for Higher Education

## **POLICY**

Compliments and Complaints will be used positively to improve service delivery.

Procedures will be open, simple and aim to deal with the complaint as near to its source as possible. Learner Services staff will provide support and advice to anybody wishing to make a complaint including those with a learning difficulty or disability. Where a learner is unable or reluctant to present their complaint without support, a member of the College's learner services team will provide that support upon request. This may include representing the learner at any meeting which forms part of a formal investigation conducted by the College.

The College will operate a fair, efficient and confidential system which is simple and accessible and does not put at risk of disadvantage or discrimination anybody who makes a complaint in good faith in accordance with this policy.

The College reserves the right to deem as "out of time" any issue that has not been raised within four months.

## **COMPLIMENTS**

Compliments received by managers or other staff will normally be passed on to the individual or individuals who is or are the subject of the compliment. A central record will be maintained by Learner Services. Managers will use compliments to motivate staff and, where appropriate, support the promotion of the College's activities.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more learners about the College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the College".

Examples of complaints include;

- Failure by the College to meet obligations including those outlined within course/learner handbooks or within the Learner Charter
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional materials and other information provided by the College
- Concerns about the delivery of a course or programme, teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided by a partner organisation
- Poor quality facilities, learning resources, or services provided directly by the College

Complaints may be brought to the attention of the College in person, in writing, by telephone or by email. Learners may submit a 'group complaint'. Where a complaint is made by a number of learners the College may ask the group to nominate one learner to act as a group representative.

Complainants should set out the details of their complaint clearly and concisely and wherever possible provide evidence to substantiate their complaint. Evidence submitted might include, for example, independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information, witness statements or other written information.

A learner who makes a complaint knowing, or having reasonable grounds for believing that it is untrue, may be subject to action in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Procedure. A complaint considered to be vexatious or malicious may be rejected subject to the complainant being advised in writing within seven days of the decision to reject the complaint.

Complaints may only be made by a learner or group of learners, parent, carer or guardian of a 16 to 18 year old learner or an employer and not by a representative or third party.

The College will endeavour to resolve complaints informally in the first instance with the objective of achieving an early resolution. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant informally; where the complainant declines to engage with the informal resolution process; or where the seriousness or complexity of the complaint is such that it is more appropriate that it be dealt with formally, the complainant will be advised of the formal complaints procedure.

Formal complaints will be recorded by the Client Services and Enrichment Manager who will maintain the centralised database and correspondence file. Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt and the complainant advised of the line manager undertaking the investigation.

Where the nature of the complaint is such that a particularly prompt response is required, to safeguard or protect an individual for example, the College will act promptly to resolve such matters as quickly as possible.

The College will allocate an investigating officer to complete an investigation into each formal complaint. The investigating officer will normally be a member of staff who has had no previous involvement in the matter. A copy of the complaint will be sent to the investigating manager who will respond to the complainant within 10 working days. Where a complaint requires more lengthy investigation, updates will be provided at intervals not exceeding 10 working days. Any complaint not resolved within 21 days will be reported to the Director of Learner Services, Planning and Diversity. Investigating managers will keep copies of any notes or correspondence undertaken in relation to the complaint.

The investigating manager will provide a written response summarising the nature of the complaint, the evidence obtained, details of any witnesses interviewed and the conclusion reached including whether a complaint is upheld or not upheld, a clear explanation for the reasons for each decision and what action is necessary. Where a complaint is upheld, the investigating manager must report in writing what action has been taken to avoid recurrence of similar complaints.

Where a complaint is received by a member of the public about general behaviour outside of the college, this will be followed up, but not logged as a formal complaint. Where we can identify individuals that are giving cause for concern this will be dealt with through either tutorial or through the disciplinary processes.

### **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the College. The College's decision in adjudging whether an anonymous complaint is investigated will be final.

### **APPEALS**

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, an appeal can be made to the Principal within 10 working days of receipt of the official response. The Principal will review the complaint and respond within 21 working days.

Appeals to the Principal should be submitted to:

The Principal, East Riding College, Flemingate Centre, Armstrong Way, BEVERLEY, East Yorkshire, HU17 0GH

Further education learners having exhausted the College's complaints procedure including the right of appeal to the Principal have a right to appeal to the Education Skills Funding Agency. Further information is available on their website or upon request from learner services.

Higher education learners enrolled on programmes validated by the University of Hull, having exhausted the College's complaints procedure, have a right of appeal within 21 days, to the University of Hull Complaints Assurance Officer in accordance with the University of Hull's Regulations for the Investigation and Determination of Complaints by Students (QH:E2).

All higher education learners, having exhausted the College's complaints procedure and, where applicable, that of the validating institution have a right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for higher education.

Where a complaint specifically relates to a National Examination Board in Occupational Health (NEBOSH) qualification, and the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the College's investigation, they may escalate their complaint directly to NEBOSH. Further information can be found on the NEBOSH website or upon request from learner services.

At conclusion of the NEBOSH complaints process, if the NEBOSH qualification is accredited by SQA Accreditation and the assessment took place within the UK, the learner may also seek regulatory advice from SQA Accreditation.

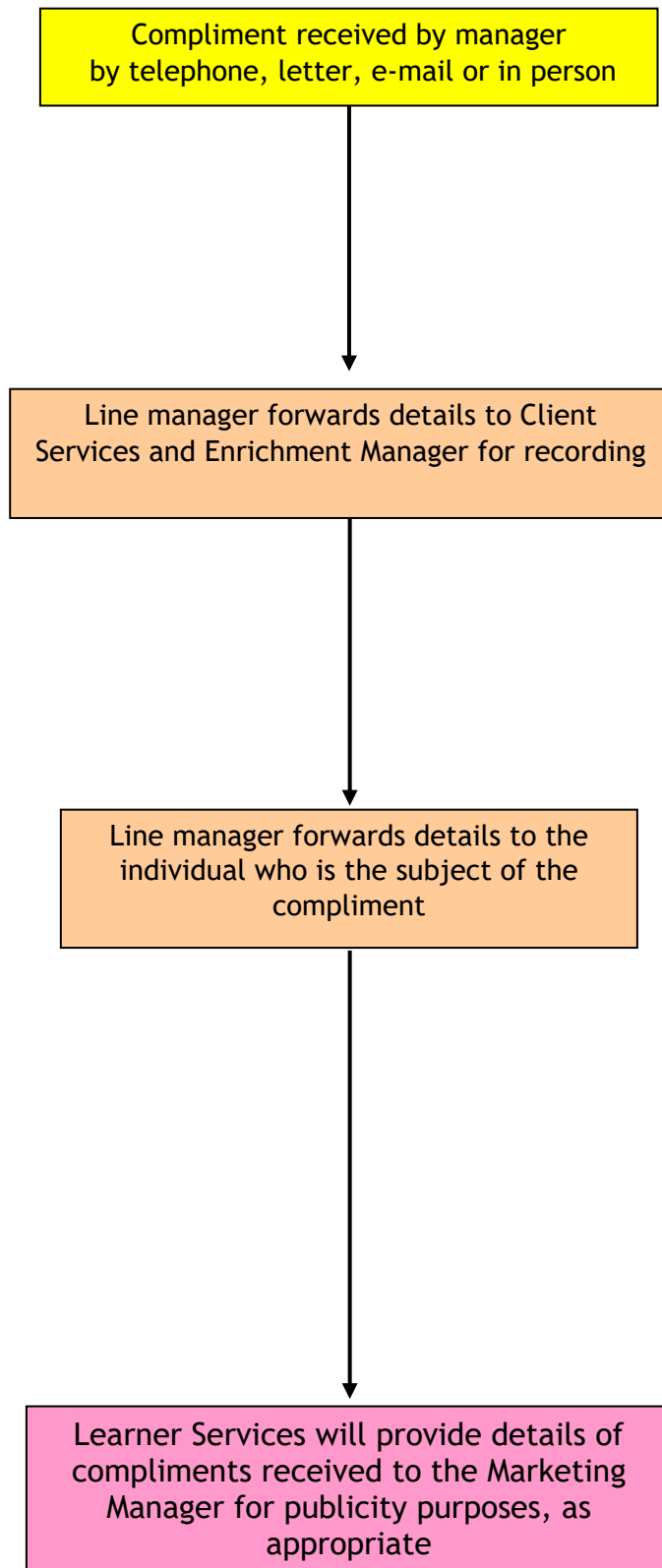
## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Compliments and complaints will reported within the College's Management Information report for consideration by the the College Leadership Team.

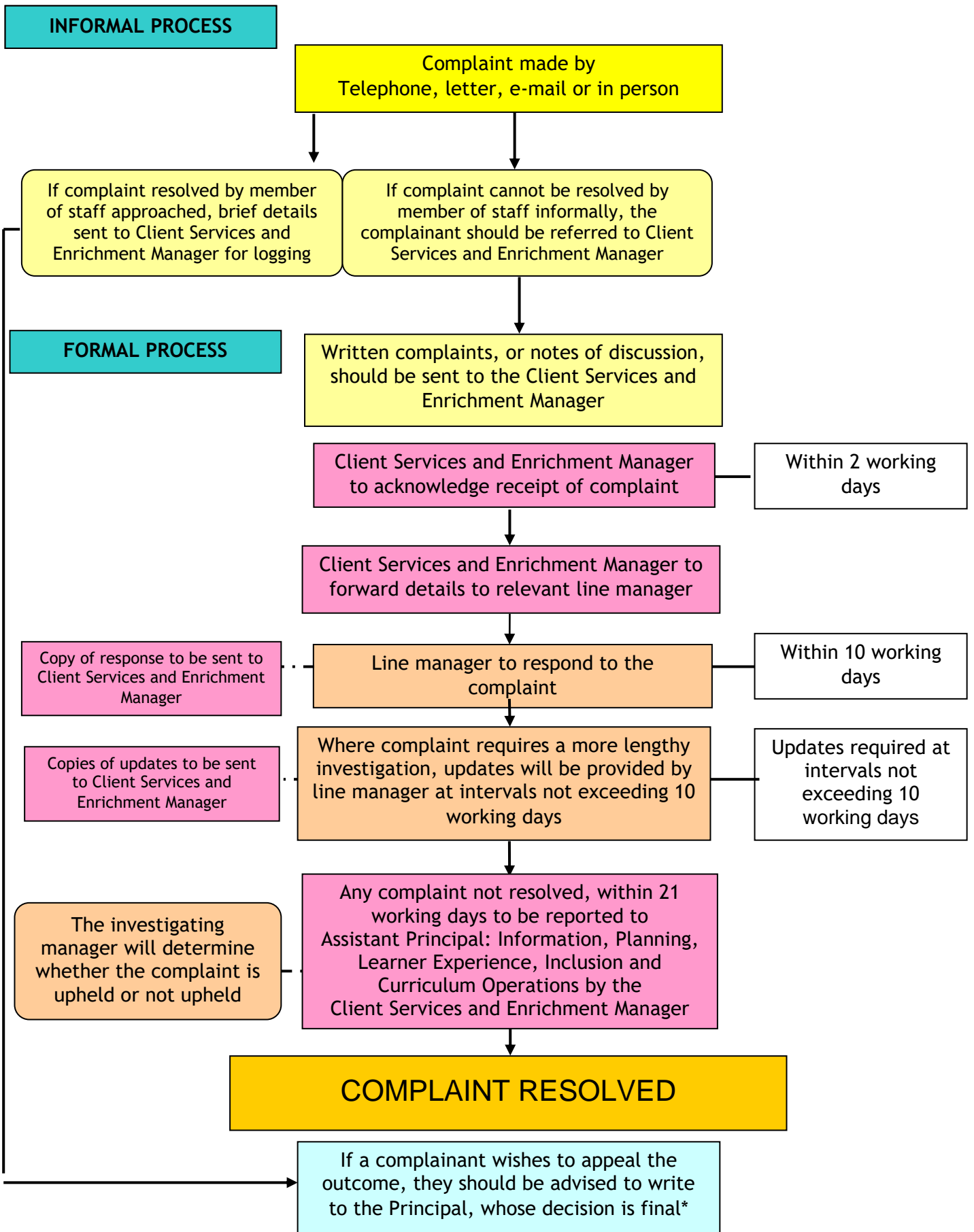
The Quality Standards Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of the Corporation, will receive an annual report on those compliments and complaints received during the previous twelve months. The Assistant Principal: Information, Planning, Learner Experience, Inclusion and Curriculum Operations will produce an annual report under the following categories:

- 1 Quality of education
- 2 College acted unreasonably
- 3 College acted in default of duties and power
- 4 Course unavailable
- 5 Manner or conduct of staff
- 6 Manner or conduct of learners
- 7 Equality and Diversity
- 8 Other

## COMPLIMENTS - FLOWCHART OF PROCESS



# COMPLIMENTS - FLOWCHART OF PROCESS



See policy for details of external appeal arrangements to funding agencies, NEBOSH validating universities and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.