



## **Calderdale College Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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**VERSION** 4

## Table of Contents

1. Purpose & Scope.....	3
2. Details of policy .....	3
2.1. How to make a complaint .....	3
2.2. Stage 1 Informal Complaints (Early Resolution) .....	3
2.3. Formal Complaints.....	3
2.4. Cut Off Limit.....	4
2.5. Timeframe .....	4
2.6. Investigation .....	4
2.7. Outcome .....	4
2.8. Appeal.....	4
2.9. Vexatious Complaints .....	5
2.10. Recording Complaints.....	5
2.11. Complaints Policy and Procedure Review .....	5
1. Monitoring.....	6
2. Policy review.....	6
3. Equality impact assessment .....	6
4. PUBLICATION .....	6
8. Appendix A – How to make a complaint .....	7
9. Appendix B – Informal Complaint Flowchart .....	8
10. Appendix C Formal Complaint Flowchart.....	9
11. Appendix D Appeal Flowchart .....	10
12. Appendix E – Complaint Form .....	11
13. Appendix F – Complaint Categories .....	12

## **1. Purpose & Scope**

Calderdale College is committed to providing a high standard of service that meets and exceeds the expectations of all our stakeholders.

The complaints policy and procedure apply to all people served by the college including students, parents, customers, employers, local residents and visitors who wish to comment on or express dissatisfaction with any aspect of the college's services.

Complaints which arise as a result of an unsatisfactory assessment (internal or external), academic appeal for OU programmes, disciplinary, and admission exclusion will have the complainant referred to the correct appeals process for those policies.

The complaints policy and procedure are designed to ensure that all complaints are resolved in a fair, consistent and timely manner, and that appropriate action is taken. All complaints will be treated as confidential to safeguard interests and information limited to those involved in the complaints process.

The outcomes from complaints support continuous improvement and will be shared with the complainant and any college staff involved.

## **2. Details of policy**

### **2.1. How to make a complaint**

Complaints can be made verbally, by telephone, email, letter or by completing a Complaints Form available on the College website and at college receptions. (Appendix 1)

### **2.2. Stage 1 Informal Complaints (Early Resolution)**

In the first instance complainants should attempt to resolve the matter informally. Issues that appear straight forward and potentially easily resolved may be directed to any relevant member of staff to seek an early resolution. Students are encouraged to resolve any issues of dissatisfaction with their course tutor so that this may be dealt with quickly and informally.

If the complainant does not want to follow the informal approach, or initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the complainant remains dissatisfied, formal procedures will need to be invoked.

### **2.3. Formal Complaints**

If the complainant does not want to follow the informal approach, or initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the complainant remains dissatisfied, formal procedures will need to be invoked. The complainant will need to complete a Complaints Form available on the College website and at college receptions. [insert link Complaints Procedure | Calderdale College](#) (Appendix 2)

## **2.4. Cut Off Limit**

The college cut-off limit to accept a complaint is 3 months after the date of an incident unless there is clear evidence that the complainant needed longer and therefore the College is willing to consider these exceptions.

## **2.5. Timeframe**

- The college aims to send an acknowledgement letter/email within 2 working days of receiving the complaint.
- The college aims to investigate and respond to complaints within 20 working days of first receiving the complaint (please note that working days are days when the College is open for lessons/exams but does not include school/college holidays).

These are the college targets for formal complaints, however, where further investigations are necessary, the complainant will be advised of the new deadline and given an explanation for the delay.

## **2.6. Investigation**

The Quality department are responsible for the operation and management of the college's complaints procedure.

Formal complaints are allocated an Investigating Officer who will be responsible for conducting a full and comprehensive investigation of the complaint.

- If the complaint is about a course or service offered by the college, the manager of the area concerned will be the responsible Investigating Officer.
- If the complaint relates to staff, an independent manager will be assigned as Investigating Officer and involve the HR Manager.
- If the complaint is against the college Principal, then the Governing Body will deal with the complaint and follow the complaints and appeal procedure.
- Where a conflict of interests is identified, an independent manager will be assigned as Investigating Officer.

## **2.7. Outcome**

The Investigating Officer will verbally communicate the outcome of the investigation to the complainant including their investigation findings and any recommended action. Following the investigation, the complainant will receive a final response letter/email to confirm the complaint outcome in writing.

## **2.8. Appeal**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after they have received the final response, they have the right to appeal which must be made in writing to the College Principal, within 10 working days of the date on the final response letter being issued.

The Principal or Designate (depending on who conducts the appeal) will respond within 10 working days and arrange an appropriate time to meet with the complainant to discuss their appeal.

An appeal hearing letter will be sent within 10 working days of the appeal hearing.

After hearing the appeal, the Principal or Deputy/Vice Principal's decision will be final.

If the complaint is not resolved to satisfaction of the complainant the following further avenues of communication are available through the relevant external agencies:

#### Further Education

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)  
OFSTED

#### Higher Education

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)  
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

These agencies may not investigate the original complaint made against the college but will look at whether the college handled the complaint appropriately. Details of how to do this can be found on the College website.

## **2.9. Vexatious Complaints**

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant becomes vexatious (e.g. the complainant tries to re-open the same issue), the college reserves the right to end the complaint handling process and will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.

## **2.10. Recording Complaints**

The Quality Department are responsible for logging and recording all complaints including details of the outcomes that have been agreed to meet the issues raised.

A central log of complaints and appeals against complaints outcomes is maintained and monitored by the Quality Department. An overview analysis of complaints received by the college is provided to Senior Leaders and the Board of Corporation.

## **2.11. Complaints Policy and Procedure Review**

The Quality Department will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure, making changes where necessary.

As well as addressing individual complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to continuous improvement. When individual complaints are heard, the Quality Department may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed in other areas or across the College.

The frequency with which the complaints procedure will be reviewed biannually, unless trends or issues require this to be conducted sooner.

## 1. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

## 2. Policy review

Change(s) Made		Reason for Change			
Policy Streamlined		Easier to read and follow			
Review Date	Reviewed by:	Initial Approval by:	Final Approval by:	Next Review Date:	Review Period
Feb 2020	Quality Systems Manager	Policies and Procedures Committee	Policies and Procedures Committee	Feb 2023	3 Years
Jul 2022	Quality Systems Manager			Jul 2026	3 years
Apr 2024	Head of Quality			Apr 2027	3 Years

## 3. Equality impact assessment

First Assessment Conducted by:	Date:	Final/Approved Assessment Conducted by:	Date:
Quality Systems Manager	Sep 2017	David Ellis Quality Systems Manager	Sep 2017

## 4. PUBLICATION

Audience:	Published:
Staff	Staff Intranet
Students	Moodle
Public	College Website

## 8. Appendix A – How to make a complaint



# How to make a Complaint

## Tell us what you think!

### *When should I make a complaint?*

- If you have an issue, problem or any concern, in the first instance you should speak to Student Services and Admissions, a Progress Coach, Tutor, Head of Faculty or a Curriculum Area Leader. Most issues can be resolved without the need for a formal complaint to be submitted.
- If your issue remains unresolved after an informal conversation you should register a complaint with the College.
- The complaint form can be found on the College website: [www.calderdale.ac.uk/contact-us/compliment-comment-or-complaint](http://www.calderdale.ac.uk/contact-us/compliment-comment-or-complaint)
- Alternatively you can pick up a form at reception and follow the instructions for completion.

### *What happens next?*

- We aim to send you an acknowledgement letter within 2 working days of receiving your complaint, confirming who will carry out the investigation along with contact details.
- Investigating staff may contact you to assist in their investigation of your complaint.
- A Final response will be sent by letter within 20 working days of first receiving the complaint. (Please note that working days are days when the College is open for lessons/exams, but does not include school/college holidays). This is our target for all complaints. If we need more time to investigate, we will explain why and when you can expect our response.

### *Appeals*

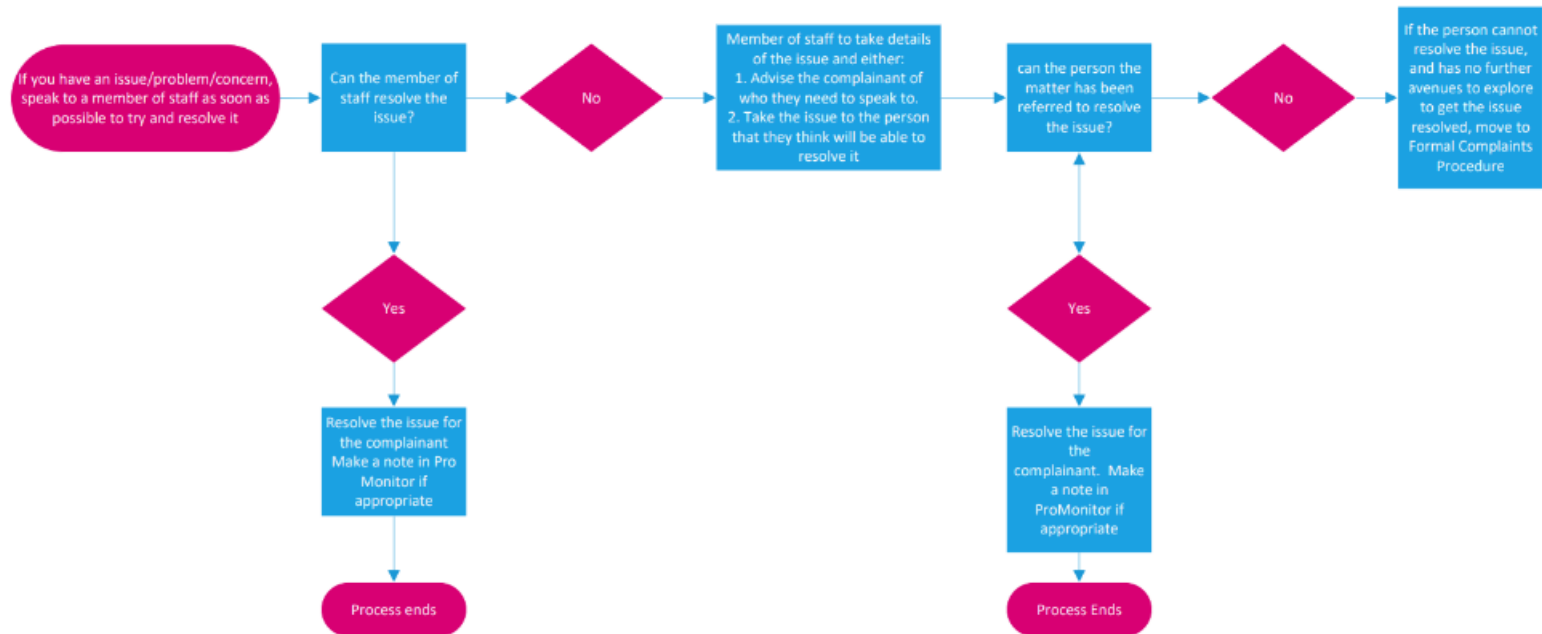
- If you remain dissatisfied after you have received the final response, you have the right of appeal which must be made in writing to the College Principal, within 10 working days of the date on the final response letter being issued.
- The Principal or designate will respond within 10 working days and arrange an appropriate time to meet with you to discuss your appeal.
- An Appeal Hearing Letter will be sent within 10 working days of the appeal hearing.
- After hearing your appeal, the Principal or Deputy/Vice Principal's decision will be final.
- If you are still dissatisfied, you have the right to appeal to either the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for FE funded courses, Awarding Body/ University. These bodies may not investigate the original complaint you made against the College but will look at whether the College handled your complaint appropriately. Details of how to do this can be found on the College website.
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### *Cut-off Limits*

The College cut-off is 3 months after the date of an incident to accept a complaint unless there is clear evidence that the complainant needed longer and therefore the College is willing to consider these exceptions.

## 9. Appendix B – Informal Complaint Flowchart

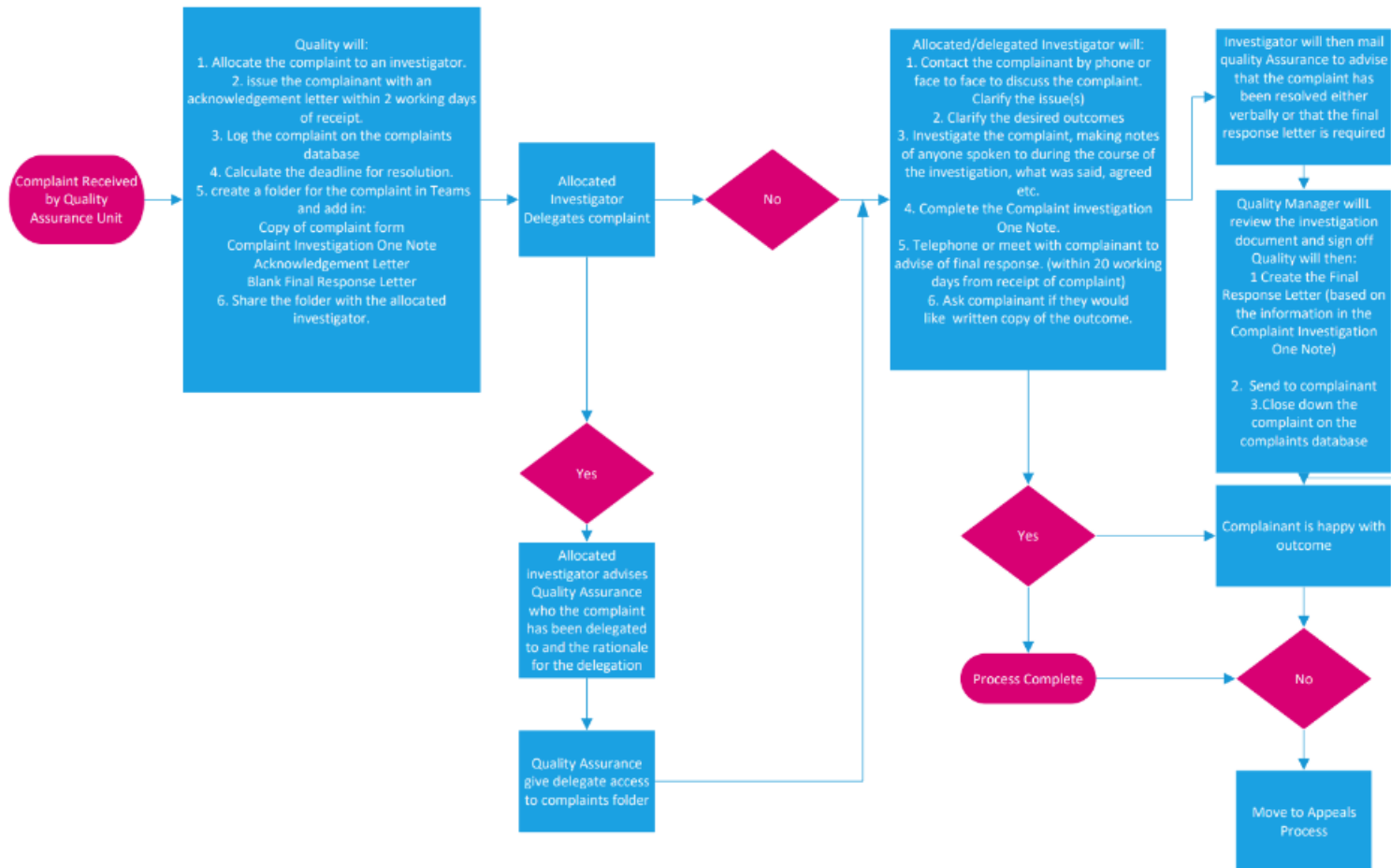
### Informal Complaint





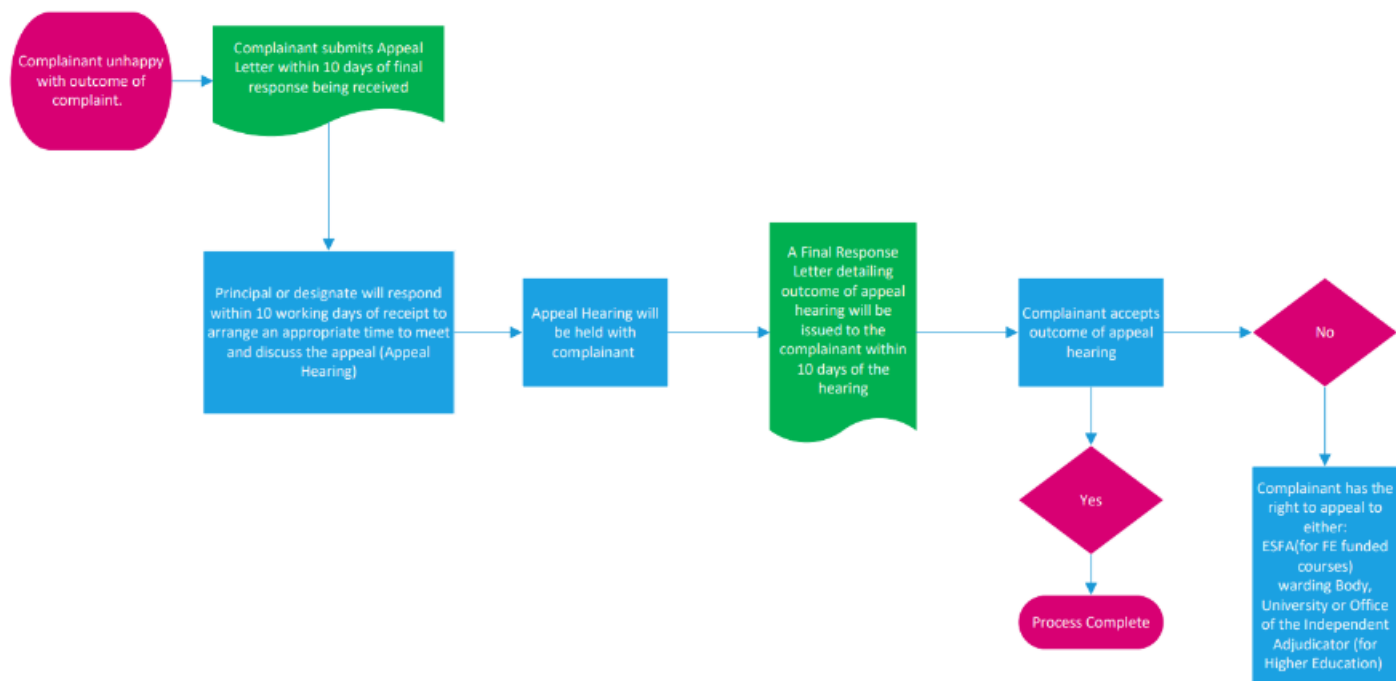
## 10. Appendix C Formal Complaint Flowchart

### Formal Complaint



## 11. Appendix D Appeal Flowchart

### Appeal



## 12. Appendix E – Complaint Form



### COMPLAINT FORM

Alternatively you can fill out the form on our website: [www.calderdale.ac.uk/contact-us/compliment-comment-or-complaint/](http://www.calderdale.ac.uk/contact-us/compliment-comment-or-complaint/)

<b>Learner ID:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Full Name:</b>			
<b>Full Postal Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone/ Mobile Number:</b>			
<b>Email Address:</b>			
<b>Who have you spoken to about your initial concerns, and when?</b>			
<b>Details of your complaint:</b> (please provide as much detail as possible, including dates, and attach any supporting documents/evidence)			
<b>Issue:</b>		<b>Desired outcome</b>	
1		1	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	

Please return this form to: Quality Assurance Unit, Calderdale College, ~~Empire~~ Street, Halifax, HX1 3UJ

### 13. Appendix F – Complaint Categories

#### COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Complaint types</b>
<b>A</b>	Category A complaints are those which could result in regulatory/legislative breaches, open up the college to potential prosecution, endanger learners or staff, cause reputational damage to the College or cause significant financial detriment to a learner.	Data Protection/GDPR/Records EDI Financial Issues Health and Safety Marketing and publicity where this may lead to accusations of misspelling a course or service Personal Injury Support Issues Safeguarding and Prevent Staff conduct and behaviour
<b>B</b>	Category B complaints are those which could cause employment delays/issues, inconvenience a learner or misinform a learner	Course Cancelled/Postponed Admissions Damage to/Loss of personal property Exam/Certificate issues causing employment problems Inappropriate use of IT Incorrect Advice and Guidance Internal and External Assessment Quality of Teaching and Learning
<b>C</b>	Category C complaints are of a more minor nature, and could inconvenience a learner.	Equipment Failure General certificate chase College Closure Inadequate Facilities Inadequate Resources Poor access to College Departments/Personnel Poor communication