



Complaints Handling Procedure Annual Summary 2017-18

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1. Performance Indicators P1-P6

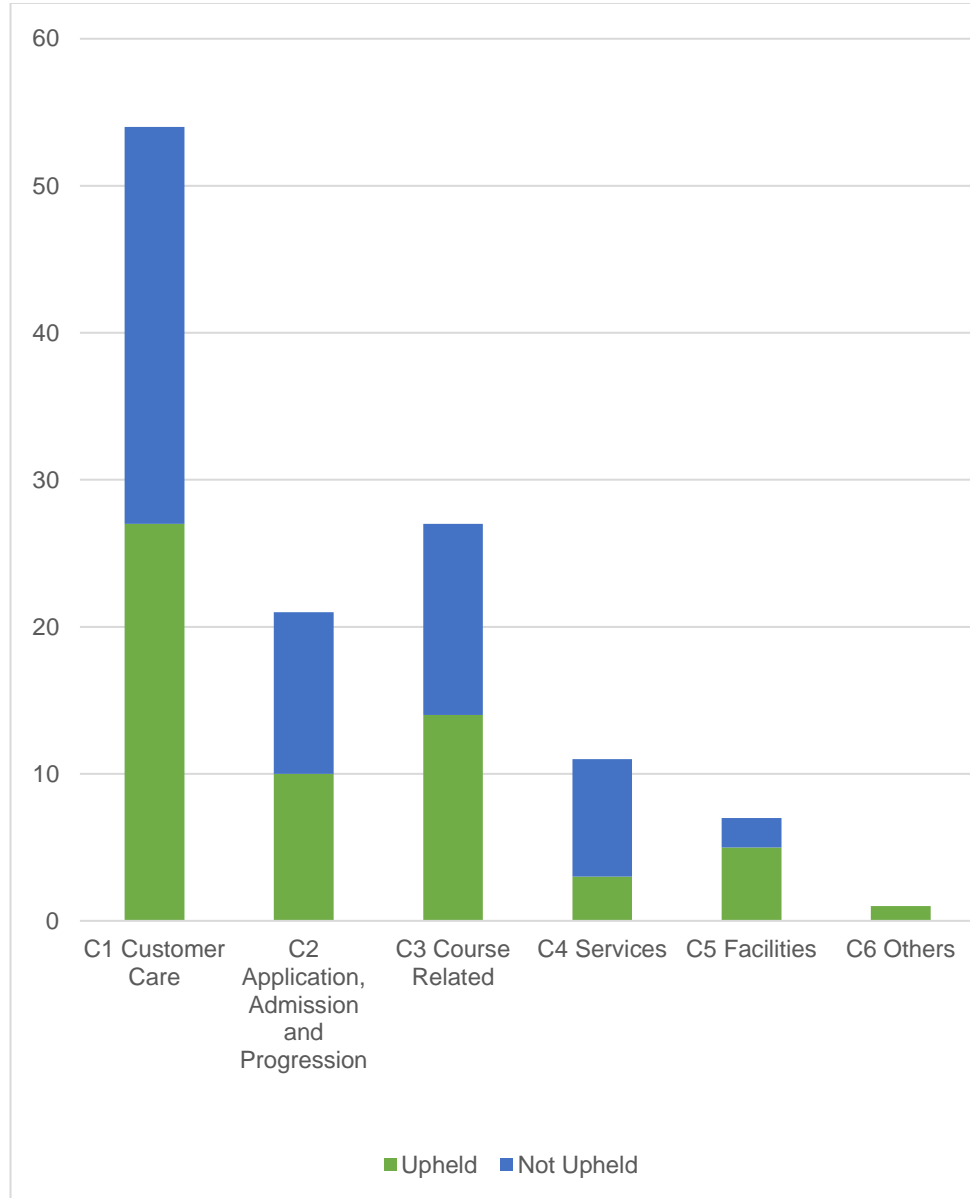
1.0 Total number of complaints received and complaints received per 100 population	2017-18		2016-17	
Number of complaints received	121		169	
Number of complaints received per 100 population as a %	1.0%		1.4%	
2.0 Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of complaints closed				
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	95	78.5%	144	85.2%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	13	10.7%	11	6.5%
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	13	10.7%	14	8.3%
3.0 Number of complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage and as a % at each stage				
Stage 1				
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	49	51.6%	102	70.8%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	46	48.4%	42	29.2%
Stage 2				
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	4	30.8%	2	18.2%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	9	69.2%	9	81.8%
Escalated				
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	7	53.8%	2	14.3%
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	6	46.2%	12	85.7%
4.0 Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage				
Total working days / ave. time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	418	4.4	573	4.0
Total working days / ave. time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	223	17.2	173	15.7
Total working days / ave. time in working days to close complaints after escalation	230	17.7	178	12.7

5.0 Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales		2017-18		2016-17	
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days		78	82.1%	120	83.3%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days		17	17.9%	24	16.7%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		12	92.3%	9	81.8%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days		1	7.7%	2	18.2%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		12	92.3%	13	92.9%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days		1	7.7%	1	7.1%
6.0 Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised					
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (ext.)		17	100.0%	22	91.7%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	2	8.3%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (ext.)		1	100.0%	1	50.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	1	50.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (ext.)		1	100.0%	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	1	100.0%

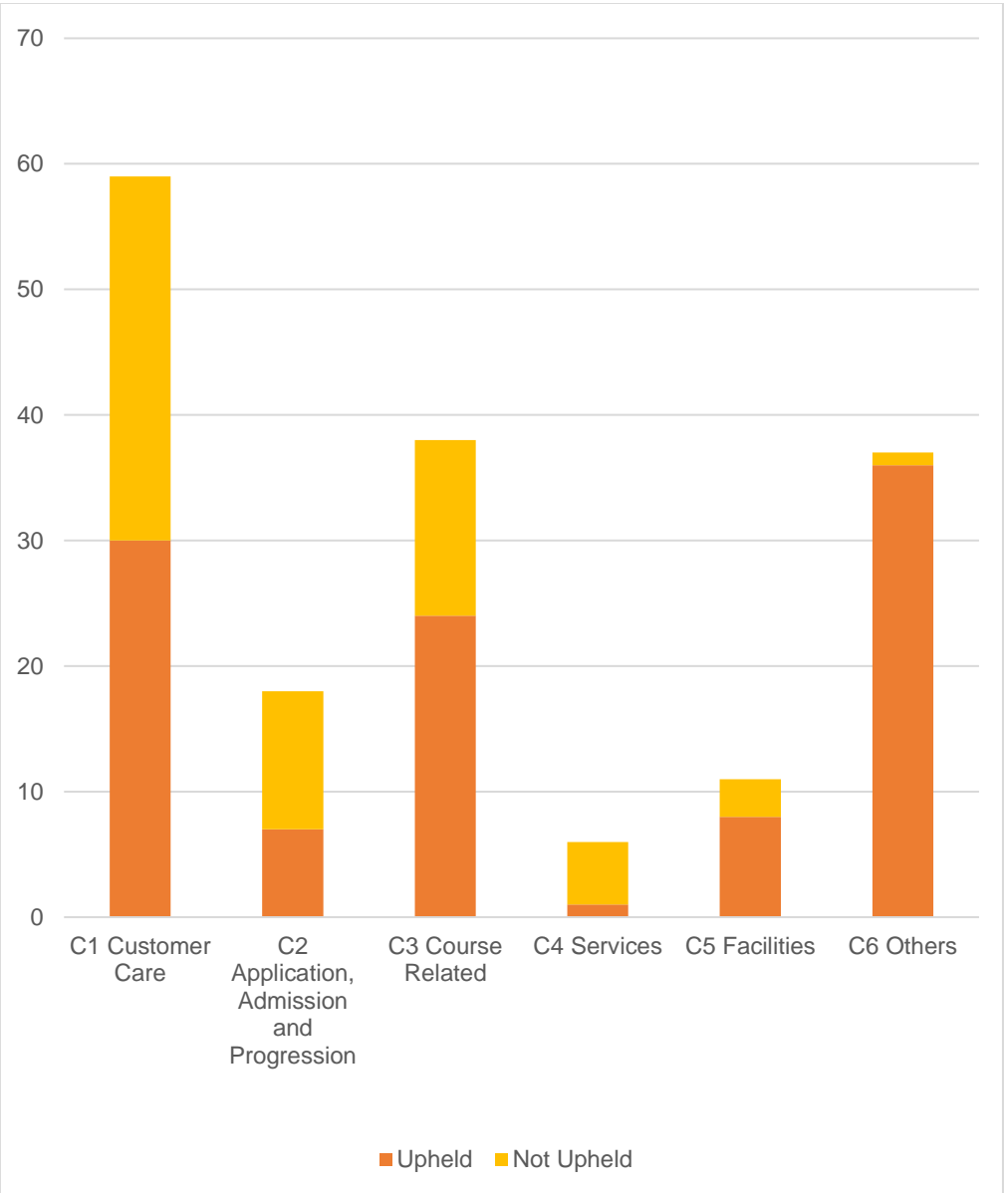
PI	Key Observations
1.0	The College received fewer complaints during 2017-18 than the previous year at 121 compared with 169. (*please note that 36 non-typical complaints arose last academic year as a result of a period of lecturing staff industrial action).
2.0	A lower percentage of complaints were investigated and closed out at Stage 1 during 2017-18 than last academic year; 78.5 % compared with 85.2% (*without the 36 industrial action complaints this figure would have been 81.2%).
3.0	In 2017-18, 49.6% were upheld, which is a decrease on the 62.7% upheld the previous year (*although worth noting that without the 36 industrial action complaints this figure would have been 51.1%).
4.0	There has been an increase in the average length of time taken to respond to complaints at all stages, however the average time taken to respond at Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated were all still within the respective 5 or 20 day targets requested by SPSO.
5.0	The number of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 days and Escalated complaints within 20 days both worsened slightly compared with last year, however more Stage 2 complaints were closed out on time versus 2016-17.
6.0	All complaints requiring an extension were closed out within the respective Stage 1: 10 day or Stage 2: 40 day target as requested by SPSO, displaying an improvement on 2016-17.
*	All complaints relating to lecturing staff industrial action were investigated at Stage 1, within 5 working days and were upheld.

2. Complaints by Category – 2017-18 vs. 2016-17

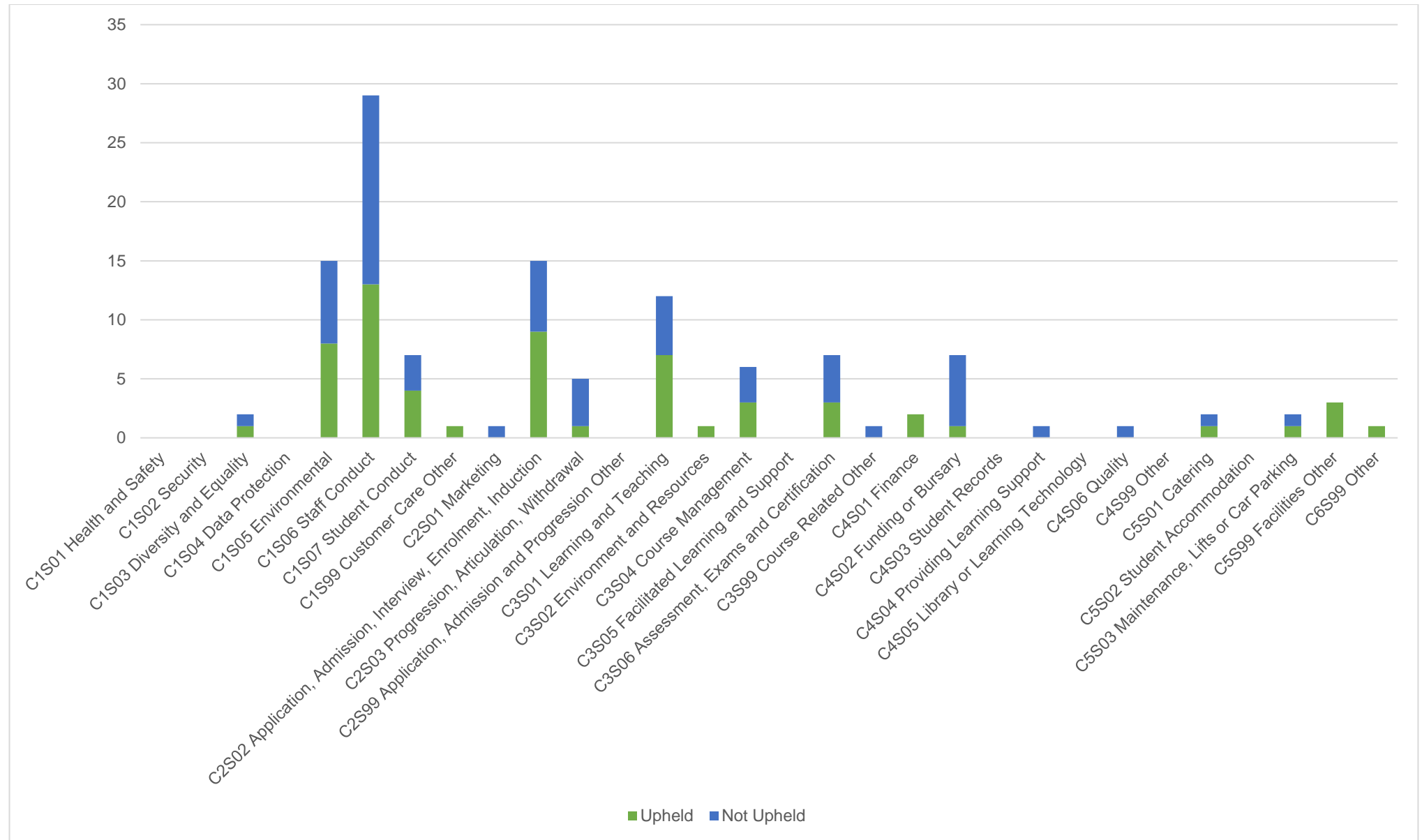
2017-18



2016-17



3. 2017-18 Complaints by Sub-category



4. 2017-18 Themes and Improvements

C1 Customer Care

As with 2016-17, the largest number of complaints received during 2017-18 were in the Customer Care category, and of the 54 complaints received, 27 were upheld.

13 complaints in this category were upheld in relation to **Staff Conduct**, as a result of either poor communication or staff not meeting the required level of customer service. In all cases, action was taken with an apology offered and staff involved being asked to reflect upon the actions which led to the complaint, and amend practice as appropriate.

Nine complaints were also upheld as a result of **Environmental / Other** issues, including from individuals having to walk past those smoking on College grounds out with designated shelters (despite 'No Smoking' signs being clearly visible) and complaints from neighbours relating to issues such as littering, noise pollution and engine idling around local properties. Four complaints received from College neighbours were also upheld regarding **Student Conduct**, with issues such as inappropriate parking and driving dangerously around streets outside College campuses highlighted. Consequently the College engaged with Glasgow City Council who have the power to sanction offenders with on-the-spot fines and in addition, a 'Respect the Local Community' campaign was launched in an attempt to highlight and discourage such actions.

One complaint was upheld regarding a **Diversity and Equality** concern, with a student feeling unable to effectively practice mindfulness in the multi-faith room, on account of being asked by individuals practicing Islam to comply with the requirements of their faith whilst using the space. As a result of this issue being highlighted, an additional 'sanctuary' type area was established for those wishing to meditate.

C2 Applications, Admission and Progression

In academic session 2017-18, in excess of 25,000 applications were received and handled by Admissions and / or Faculty staff. 21 complaints were received in the Applications, Admission and Progression category and of these, 10 were upheld.

Administrative errors led to four complaints being upheld in relation to **Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment or Induction**. One complaint concerned lack of feedback on an application, and it was established that human error led to the outcome of an admissions interview not being communicated to the applicant within an appropriate timescale. Another applicant complained that reasons given for not being offered a place on a course were unclear, and it was shown that an administrative error meant the individual was sent an incorrect email. Another administrative error led to a complaint from someone who was mistakenly offered an interview, which was subsequently withdrawn and similarly a complaint came from a student wrongly offered progression to a HNC course, who was later advised that the offer was being revoked. In all instances, an apology was offered for the administrative errors and interviews / places were offered as appropriate.

C2 Applications, Admission and Progression continued

Five complaints were also upheld in the **Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment or Induction** sub-category as a result of the conduct of admissions interviews. In a couple of instances, this was because relevant qualifications / voluntary experience were rejected by interviewers. These applications were reviewed and the decision not to offer a place reversed. Another complainant was unhappy with the lack of support and arrangements made for his son's interview for a supported learning programme, and investigation confirmed that staff had not offered an adequate level of support. The applicant was subsequently offered a place on the course and staff were reminded of the accepted process for arranging interviews for students with additional requirements. A further complainant felt that his interview was disorganised and an apology was offered for the inconvenience caused. Another complainant was dissatisfied with lack of information provided in advance of her interview, specifically in relation to a written task she was asked to undertake. Upon investigation, it was established that although there is a statement on the application page of the website regarding the written task, the interview invitation letter did not make the format of the interview clear. Staff were consequently instructed to notify all applicants of the written task and details of its content within all future interview invitation letters.

One complaint was upheld as a result of a **Progression** issue; with a student being advised that she would not be allowed to progress from NQ to HNC despite having successfully completed the NQ course, due to the limited number of places being offered to continuing students versus external applicants, Upon reviewing the application, the individual was subsequently offered a place, and departmental practice in relation to progression, reconsidered.

C3 Course Related

14 of the 27 complaints received in the 'Course Related' category were upheld. Two of these related to inadequate **Course Management** including poor organisation e.g. late arrival of course books, change of course dates and email issues. As soon as the problems surfaced, they were quickly remedied and apologies were offered for the inconvenience. A further **Course Management** complaint also arose as a result of lack of organisation (specifically timetabling), during a temporary period of staff absence and again when the issue was highlighted, intervention was quick and to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Seven complaints were upheld in association with the **Quality of Learning and Teaching**, and these were addressed with assorted resolutions including providing a clearer learning structure, regularly reminding learners of assignments due and the requirements for each assignment, providing personalised feedback, involving more experienced lecturers and providing additional staff training and support in regards to learning and teaching approaches.

One complaint pertaining to a poor **Environment and Resources** for a large class group was upheld. A short term measure was taken to raise the temporary Smartboard to make it easier for learners to view, with an alternative room sourced for the second teaching block. It was however also agreed that longer term there would be a formal proposal to extend the room to accommodate larger class groups.

C3 Course Related continued

Of the three **Assessment, Exams and Certification** complaints upheld, one related to a delay in certification, and when this was identified, a scanned copy of the certificate was emailed immediately in an effort to resolve the situation quickly, with the original certificate being sent by first class post on the same day. Another complaint related to poor arrangements for a student with additional support requirements during the main SQA external examination diet. Investigation identified that there were errors made by the invigilator, so as well as offering an apology to the complainant, the invigilator was reminded of accepted practice. The remaining complaint concerned dissatisfaction with a change of assessment grade following internal verification. Investigation concluded that the lecturer had not made it clear enough to learners that their grade could change, as assessment decisions are subject to verification. All staff within the department were reminded to make it clearer to students that grades are subject to verification, and as such may be modified.

C4 Services

Three of the 11 complaints in the 'Services' category were upheld, two in the **Finance** sub-category relating to delays with processing refunds. Upon being notified of these problems, refunds were immediately processed and apologies offered. In addition, the main department involved were tasked with improving their procedure for dealing with enquiries during prolonged absence of key staff.

One complaint was upheld relating to lack of feedback regarding a **Bursary** application. It was established that the delay resulted from repeat failed attempts to correspond via email. Consequently a copy of the student's award letter was immediately sent and an apology offered. The IT department and bursary software company were also contacted to establish why previous attempts at email had failed.

C5 Facilities

One complaint was upheld in the **Catering** sub-category, and related to the poor quality of a sandwich purchased from the College canteen. The complainant was offered an apology and a full refund, as well as a free lunch for the inconvenience caused. The catering production team were also asked to carry out additional checks on finished products before sealing and labelling, to ensure consistency.

The complaint upheld in the **Maintenance, Lifts or Parking** sub-category pertained to a non-disabled badge holder parking in a disabled space, and as a result there was increased monitoring of disabled spaces, as well as a formal communication to staff and students explaining that disabled spaces should not be occupied unless a valid blue badge is displayed.

Two of the three complaints upheld in the **Other** sub-category related to lack of student recreational space, and as a result it was agreed that students could use a designated classroom during specific times, as long as they were willing to take responsibility for looking after the space. Longer term it was also agreed that a suitable recreational space would be requested during the College Planning Process. A further complaint upheld concerned lack of sanitary vending machines and it was explained to the complainant that the College was in the process of changing supplier for hygiene services, and that new vending machines would be installed in all toilets once the new contract became live.

C6 Other

The complaint upheld in the **Others** category related to withdrawal of an award from a student for the reason he was unable to attend the awards ceremony to receive the award. Following investigation, it was established that improvements were required to the system being used to log replies regarding attendance at the awards ceremony. The student was subsequently sent a copy of the ceremony brochure and a medal in recognition of the award gained.

5. Learning from Complaints

The College accepts that expressions of dissatisfaction offer an opportunity to review practice and in order to improve learning from complaints, Assistant Principals now receive Monthly Reports highlighting complaints received and responded to within their areas of responsibility. In addition, Quarterly reports continue to be reviewed by Senior Management and an Annual Summary approved by the Board of Management, before publication on the College website.

A considerable number of complex complaints relating to Staff Conduct have been handled this academic year, resulting in an upsurge in staff enquiries regarding the status and outcome of the complaint investigation. Greater transparency is therefore required when a complaint is made about a member of staff, to ensure that they are kept fully informed regarding the investigation and conclusions.

6. Customer Satisfaction

The College requests formal feedback from complainants on their satisfaction with the complaints process via a follow up survey after the complaint has been closed out. In 2017-18 there were 28 responses received to surveys emailed (23% of complainants).

From the 28 responses, 43% of respondents agreed that they were 'aware of the complaints handling procedure before making a complaint' and 61% 'found it easy to access information about the procedure'; which although an improvement on 2016-17, indicates that further publicity of the procedure is still required. Most complaints received were via email to the address complaints@glasgowclyde.ac.uk however 25% disagreed that 'it was easy to make their complaint'.

Just over a third of complainants felt that their 'complaint was taken seriously' and that the 'response they received addressed the content of their complaint' and in addition only 21% felt that their complaint was properly investigated. These figures show a decrease in satisfaction compared with 2016-17.

This decrease in satisfaction was also evident from the responses to the questions regarding being 'dealt with courteously at all times', with 68% agreement and being 'happy with the time taken to respond to the complaint' at 50%, compared to 93% satisfaction for both of these questions last academic year.

7. Conclusions

Strengths

- The College employs a robust system for recording and monitoring complaints, which meets legislative and SPSO requirements.
- Response times for addressing complaints remain, on average, below SPSO requested timescales for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.

Areas for Improvement

- Complaint Handlers remain heavily relied upon to distribute reminders to Complaint Reviewers to ensure that complaints are answered within required timescales.
- The process for keeping staff in the loop regarding the investigation and conclusions of a complaint made about them, requires development.
- Complainant satisfaction with complaint handling has deteriorated with only one fifth of those responding to the post response survey feeling that their complaint was properly investigated, therefore additional training on investigating and responding to complaints must be considered.