

Complaint Handling Procedure Annual Report 2018-19

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1. Performance Indicators P1-P6

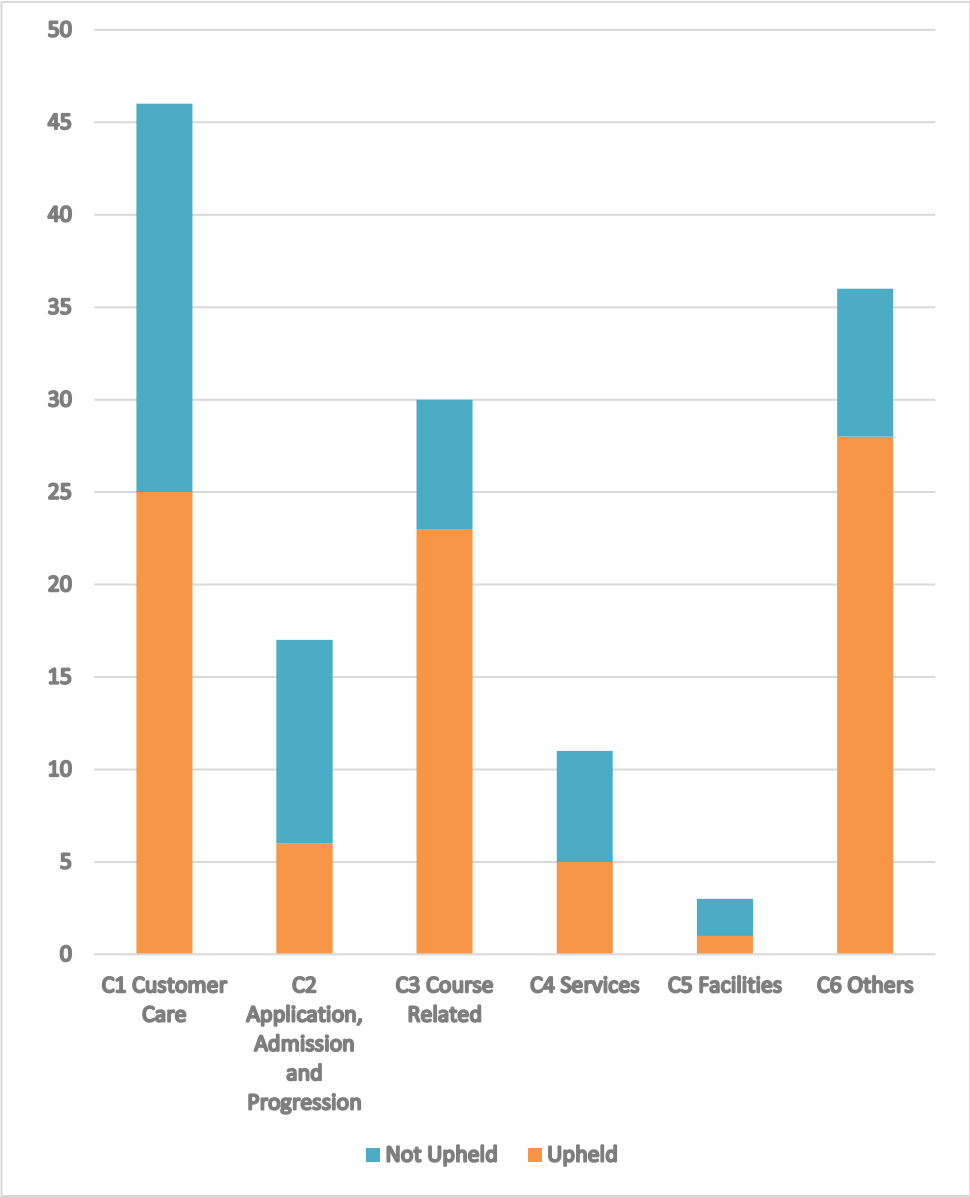
1.0 Total number of complaints received and complaints received per 100 population	2018-19		2017-18	
Number of complaints received	143		121	
Number of complaints received per 100 population as a %	1.2%		1.0%	
2.0 Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of complaints closed				
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	122	85.3%	95	78.5%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	13	9.1%	13	10.7%
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	8	5.6%	13	10.7%
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	83	68.0%	49	51.6%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	39	32.0%	46	48.4%
Stage 2				
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%	4	30.8%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	13	100.0%	9	69.2%
Escalated				
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	5	62.5%	7	53.8%
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	3	37.5%	6	46.2%
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	401	3.3	418	4.4
Total working days / ave. time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	269	20.7	223	17.2
Total working days / ave. time in working days to close complaints after escalation	151	18.9	230	17.7

5.0 Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales		2018-19		2017-18	
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days		111	91.0%	78	82.1%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days		11	9.0%	17	17.9%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		9	69.2%	12	92.3%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days		4	30.8%	1	7.7%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		7	87.5%	12	92.3%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days		1	12.5%	1	7.7%
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.)		11	100.0%	17	100.0%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (ext.)		4	100.0%	1	100.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (ext.)		1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (ext.)		0	0.0%	0	0.0%

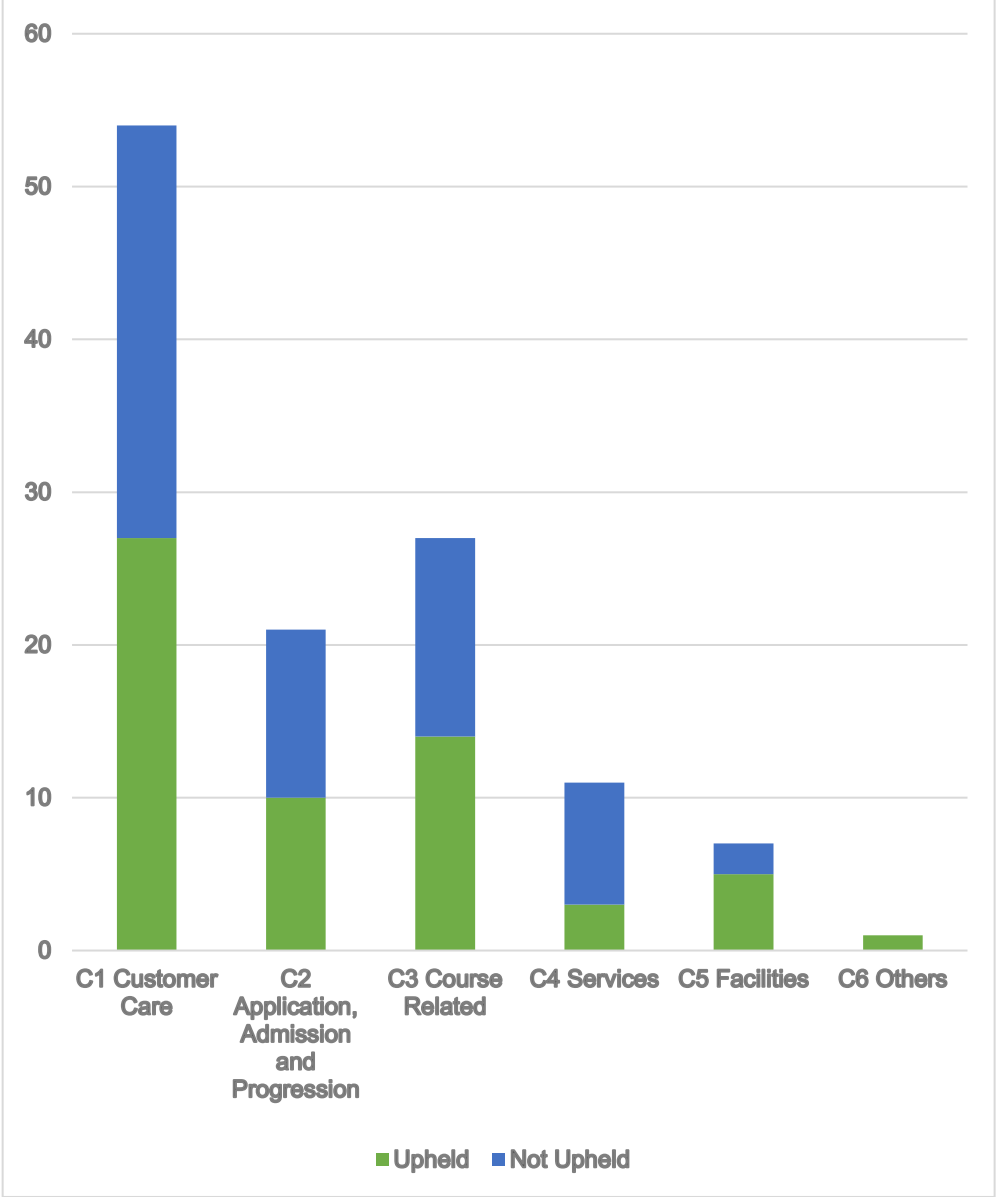
PI	Key Observations
1.0	The College received more complaints during 2018-19 than the previous year at 143 compared with 121. (*please note that 33 non-typical complaints arose this academic year as a result of a period of lecturing staff industrial action).
2.0	More complaints were investigated and closed out at Stage 1 during 2018-19 than last academic year; 91.0 % compared with 82.1% (*however without the 33 industrial action complaints this figure would have been lower at 78.8%).
3.0	In 2018-19, 61.5% were upheld, which is an increase on the 49.6% upheld the previous year (*without the 33 industrial action complaints, this figure would have been 54.5%, which is still an increase compared with 2017-18).
4.0	There was a decrease in the average length of time taken to respond to Stage 1 complaints, and although the average time taken to respond to Escalated complaints did increase compared with last academic year, it still remained below 20 days. However Stage 2 average response time increased to 20.7 days, taking it over the 20 day target requested by SPSO.
5.0	The number of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 days increased, however response within the 20 day SPSO timescale for both Stage 2 and Escalated complaints worsened on average compared with last academic year.
6.0	All complaints requiring an extension were closed out within the respective Stage 1 10 day or Stage 2 40 day target, requested by SPSO.
*	All complaints relating to lecturing staff industrial action were investigated at Stage 1, within 5 working days and 28 were upheld.

2. Complaints by Category – 2018-19 vs. 2017-18

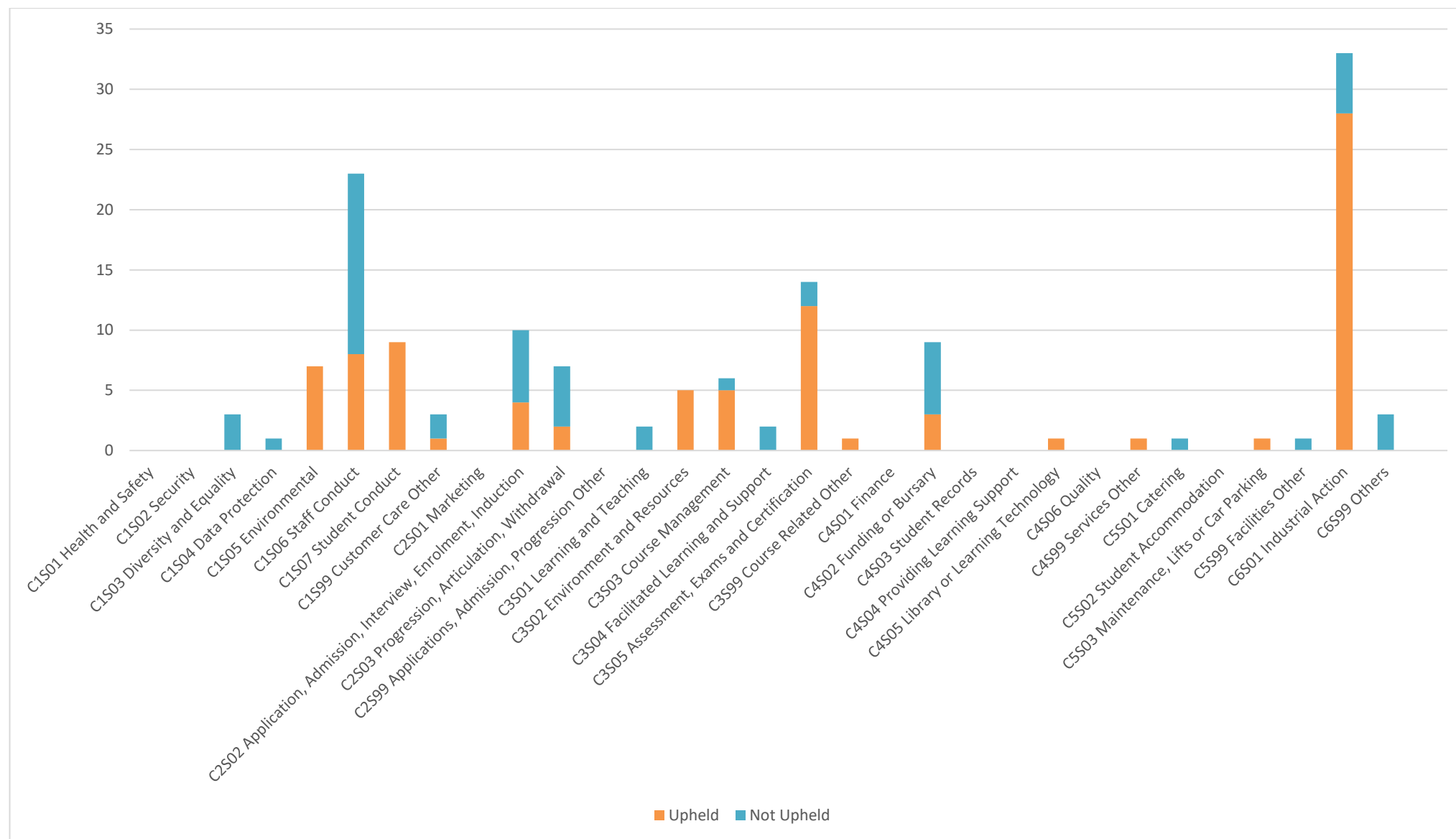
2018-19



2017-18



3. 2018-19 Complaints by Sub-category



4. 2018-19 Themes and Improvements

C1 Customer Care

Although an improvement on last year, the largest number of complaints received during the 2018-19 academic year related to **Customer Care**, and of the 46 received, 25 were upheld. This category also attracted the greatest number of complaints during 2017-18.

Seven **Environmental** complaints were upheld; five received by neighbours of the College and a further two from students. Three College neighbours were unhappy with noise associated with car park works, particularly early in the morning. It was established that a contractor had breached an agreement to operate during the hours of 8am to 7pm only, therefore the contractor was reminded that works be conducted only within the stipulated hours. One neighbour was unhappy with a nuisance noise coming from Cardonald campus, and investigation established the source to be a recently installed AH Unit. Timing clocks were subsequently re-programmed to ensure the unit was only operational during core hours. One neighbour complained about fly tipping at Anniesland campus and staff quickly reacted to clear the debris and cut back the shrubbery in an attempt to prevent recurrence. One student was unhappy with a lack of water and heating caused by a failure in the College's mechanical plant. The building was temporarily closed and the water and heating issues remedied as soon as possible. The remaining complaint was from a student who witnessed a sick member of staff wash up at a sink in a food preparation area. The Catering Manager instructed an immediate deep clean of the area and organised staff development for the worker.

Eight **Staff Conduct** complaints were upheld as a result of either poor responsiveness to requests, less than satisfactory behaviour or staff not meeting the necessary level of customer service. In each case an apology was provided, and staff involved being asked to reflect upon the actions which led to the complaint. In addition some staff were also trained to adopt more insightful classroom management techniques and develop greater emotional intelligence

Eight complaints regarding **Student Conduct** were received from College neighbours and issues highlighted mainly related to inconsiderate parking or students loitering and littering at private residences. The Student Association (GCCSA) regularly contacted learners throughout the academic year to reinforce the need for considerate behaviour towards neighbours whilst attending College. The Community Police and Glasgow City Council wardens were also periodically asked to show a presence around the local area, thus reminding students of their responsibilities. One complaint was also raised by a student of Glasgow Clyde College relating to the number of smokers and amount of cigarette litter at the entrance to the Cardonald campus. GCCSA followed up by sending out messages on social media and worked with the College Marketing department to create a campaign with the message '*A clean campus is everyone's job*'.

The remaining complaint upheld in this category was as a result of a delay in providing information sought via a **Subject Access Request** and investigation demonstrated that due to the complexity of the request, additional time was required, but that this had not been effectively communicated to the applicant. To resolve the issue, as much information as had already been gathered was sent immediately, with the rest to follow in due course. An apology was offered to the complainant for the inconvenience caused.

C2 Applications, Admission and Progression

In session 2018-19, the Admissions department and / or Faculty staff received and handled 30,180 applications. 17 complaints were received in the **Applications, Admission and Progression** category and six of these were upheld, which is an improvement on 2017-18.

Four complaints were upheld in the **Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment or Induction** sub-category. One complainant was dissatisfied with the application process, and it was identified that there had been a delay in processing her application, leading to her being placed on the interview waiting list as opposed to being offered an interview outright. The applicant was subsequently offered an interview. One complainant was unhappy that her son had been invited to interview even though the course was already full. It was explained that his interview was for a reserve list place, however it was accepted that the interview invite did not make this clear, therefore an apology was offered, as well as a guaranteed place for the applicant on the January start programme. Another complainant was dissatisfied with communication regarding his application, and it was established that delays had been brought about because of a change of staffing. The complainant was offered an apology and reassured that he was still a prospective student for the course and that he would be notified of interview dates in due course. The remaining upheld complaint related to lack of communication following an admissions interview. It was confirmed that the Senior Lecturer had been struggling to meet the demand to communicate with all applicants due to the extremely high volume of applications for the popular course. An apology and waiting list place were offered.

Two complaints upheld in this category related to **Progression** issues, the first concerning a conditional offer being revoked and replaced with an alternative offer, which included a more stringent set of conditions. After further consideration, it was agreed that it would be unfair to impose a revised set of conditions, therefore the original conditions were reinstated. The other upheld complaint in this sub-category was from a student who had been advised that she would not be offered a conditional place on the next level of the course despite having successfully completed the introductory programme. Initial review established that an error on the College Website regarding mode of attendance had led to the initial confusion, and contributed to the disadvantage in the complainant not being offered a place. Further investigation ascertained that two applicants who had applied at a later date than the complainant, had been offered conditional places, therefore the original decision not to offer a conditional place to the complainant was reversed.

C3 Course Related

23 of the 30 complaints received in the **Course Related** category were upheld this academic year, which is a significant increase on the 14 upheld during 2017-18.

The largest spike was in the **Assessment, Exams and Certification** sub-category, with 12 complaints relating to problems experienced during assessment being upheld. Most complaints received followed the SQA examination diet, with 11 students complaining mainly about disruptive interruptions experienced. This resulted in exceptional circumstances reports being submitted to SQA for applicable candidates, as well as invigilators being reminded of their responsibilities, with appropriate conduct during unexpected interruptions reinforced.

C3 Course Related continued

The remaining complaint upheld in this sub-category concerned a student being disturbed whilst undertaking a Graded Unit exam. The exam took place in an alternative assessment arrangement room, adjacent to a noisy staff workroom. Following the complaint, it was agreed that the accommodation was not fit for assessment purposes, therefore would no longer be used.

Five complaints upheld in the **Environment or Resources** sub-category arose as a result of technical issues leading to learners not being able to print from MAC computers. Investigation identified that a recent upgrade to the operating system had inadvertently caused the print issue, and in order to allow the students to work effectively, an interim measure was applied to allow printing from MACs, bypassing the print management solution. With support from the College's external print management company, the problem was thereafter fully resolved.

Five complaints upheld in the Course Related category fell into the **Course Management** sub-category. Two complainants experienced issues with their timetable; one student with late issue and the other unfavourable last minute amendments. It was established that staffing changes had led to the delay in issuing a definitive timetable to the first student and the timetable was subsequently provided on the same day. To remedy the last minute amendments problem, the student was moved to a different class group, who were timetabled on different days. Two upheld complaints related to frequent late cancellation of classes due to staff shortages. A number of measures were put in place to improve this, including appointing a new full time permanent lecturer, re-advertising for additional permanent employees, recruiting additional temporary staff, supporting the learning process via extra materials on VLE and delaying the Graded Unit examination by two weeks. The remaining complaint resulted from lack of structure in the teaching of a revised qualification. In response, the member of staff was asked to quickly provide the class with a written structure, including handouts clearly explaining the requirements of the updated course, both in terms of project and final examination.

The remaining Course Related complaint was sub-categorised within **Others**, and concerned the basic nature of a leisure course versus how it was advertised on the College website, as well as the use of unsuitable accommodation for teaching and learning. It was established that although the website course description was accurate, not enough time had been spent assessing participant prior knowledge for this particular group, leading to a longer than usual time being spent teaching fundamental techniques. It was agreed that better initial assessment of participant skills would be undertaken for future class groups. It was also agreed that the room used was not entirely fit for purpose, therefore the complainant was offered a refund of course fee or a place on an alternative course of similar value.

C4 Services

Of the 11 complaints received in the **Services** category, five were upheld this academic year; three within the sub-category Funding or Bursary, one relating to Learning Technology and the remaining complaint concerning the College nursery.

C4 Services continued

Two complaints upheld in the **Funding or Bursary** sub-category, were from students who felt that the advertising of the Higher Education Discretionary Fund was inadequate. It was ascertained that the fund had been advertised via Facebook and Twitter, however it was conceded that for some students, this might not have been an appropriate medium. It was agreed that Marketing would advise the Student Funding team on methods for circulating such messages to students more widely in future. A complaint in this sub-category was also upheld from a student whose bursary application had been rejected following confusion over whether her programme was eligible for bursary, on the grounds of demonstrating progression. After initially rejecting the application, it was established that the course was in fact eligible, therefore the application was subsequently accepted.

One complaint related to **Learning Technology**; specifically the reliability of the College VLE service and loss of assessment work due to a technical issue. It was ascertained that the daily back up to the College servers had failed, leading to the requirement to undertake recovery work. This meant all work completed on the VLE that day was lost. The student's assignment task had been carried out on a PC, not on the main college network, therefore the assignment was able to be recovered and resubmitted without the requirement to undertake further work. The College are currently reviewing back-up procedures, including launching a major project, involving a move to a cloud based, vendor hosted VLE on Amazon Web Servers.

The final complaint upheld in this category concerned the application process for the College **Nursery** and included aspects of poor communication and response to enquiries. Following investigation it was concluded that the process for dealing with enquiries when key staff are on leave was not robust enough, and as a result of the complaint, a review of the overall process was undertaken.

C5 Facilities

One **Facilities** complaint was upheld, as a result of a Pupil Support Assistant (taxiing four supported learning students), waiting over ten minutes for the College security barrier to be opened. A technical fault had caused a communication issue to the barrier, which once highlighted, was immediately resolved. The College also undertook to review the technical element which caused the problem.

C6 Other

All 27 complaints upheld in this category related to lecturing staff **Industrial Action** at Glasgow Clyde College. Although the dispute was between the EIS and the national bargaining process, the College pledged to do whatever possible to minimise impact on students and clear any backlogs once the strike was over. A range of actions were put in place to support learners, including extending the academic year and running additional teaching sessions.

5. Complainant Satisfaction

The College requests formal feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with the complaints process, via a follow up survey after the complaint has been closed out. In 2018-19 there were 30 responses received to surveys emailed (21% of complainants).

- From the 30 responses, only 27% of respondents confirmed that they were *'aware of the complaints handling procedure before making a complaint'*. That said, 77% *'found it easy to access information about the procedure'*; which is an improvement on 61% in 2017-18. Similarly 77% of respondents found it *'easy to make their complaint'*, which is a very slight improvement compared to last year.
- 57% of complainants felt that their *'complaint was taken seriously'*, which although a respectable improvement on 36% during 2017-18, still falls well short of the desired 100%. Likewise 57% felt that their *'complaint was properly investigated'* which is a significant improvement on 21% in 2017-18. There was also an improvement in the number of complainants feeling that *'the response received addressed the content of the complaint'* shifting from 36% in 2017-18, to 67% this academic year.
- 67% of respondents felt that they were *'dealt with courteously at all times'*, which roughly compares with last year.
- 67% also agreed that they were *'happy with the time taken to respond to the complaint'* (despite nine out of ten of those who expressed dissatisfaction receiving their response within the SPSO target 5 or 20 days). This is a significant decrease from 93% last academic year.

Overall the above responses demonstrate that complainants are generally more satisfied with the handling of their complaint than last academic year's complainants, however improvements are still required.

6. SPSO

SPSO informed Glasgow Clyde College that they had been asked to review two complaints handled by us during 2018-19. SPSO felt that in both cases the College's response had been reasonable and that there was no evidence to demonstrate any fault or failure in how the complaints were handled, therefore they did not take either complaint forward.

7. Learning from Complaints

The College embraces the fact that complaints offer us an opportunity to review and improve practice. In order to ensure effective learning from complaints, Assistant Principals receive and review Monthly Reports which highlight complaints received and responded to within their areas of responsibility. In addition, Quarterly Reports are examined by Senior Management and an Annual Report by the Board of Management.