



**TRAFFORD &  
STOCKPORT**  
COLLEGE GROUP

# **Complaints and Compliments Policy**

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## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to set out Trafford & Stockport College Group's approach to continuous improvement and feedback, but also to provide a clear process to be followed in the event of a complaint or a compliment.

- A complaint is any expression of grievance that a college service has failed or is failing to meet reasonable expectations, or that a member of staff or a student has behaved or is behaving unreasonably.
- A compliment is where the college is exceeding expectations.

## **2. Scope**

The Policy applies to complaints raised by students, parents, carers employers, customers or the general public in relation to College activities, employees and provision. The Policy is not applicable to employees who have a grievance against an individual person such as another employee or student. Such grievances are the subject of a separate Staff Grievance Procedure.

This policy specifically excludes complaints relating to Trafford & Stockport College Group Admissions Policy and Assessment Appeals as other policies apply.

This Policy should be used in the event of any person disputing the College's delivery of standards; or:

- To provide feedback to enable the College to improve in any aspect.
- Deficiencies in standards of service (which might include problems with support facilities such as welfare, accommodation, and teaching facilities).
- Dissatisfaction with standards of teaching provision (for example, the basic academic framework such as structure, arrangements for assessment and information provided about a course).
- Dissatisfaction with the arrangements of the provision for tuition.
- Other deficiencies in the quality of the student experience.
- To pass on feedback of a positive nature that might lead to further positive experiences.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

- All employees have a responsibility to listen and try to resolve concerns at the point of origin.
- Assistant Principals are responsible for acknowledging, investigating, and resolving formal complaints within their area of responsibility.
- The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for considering Appeals against the findings of an investigation into a complaint.
- The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for the operation of the Complaints and Compliments Policy, including the recording, analysis and reporting on trends and issues around complaints, compliments and feedback.

## Policy

### 4. Complaints

- 4.1. The College will keep a complaint confidential in as far as is necessary to comply with its data protection obligations. No complainant or person complained against will be discriminated against while the complaint is being dealt with. The College cannot guarantee confidentiality and it may deem it necessary to divulge certain information if the College believes there is a Health and Safety or Safeguarding risk. The College confirms to students as part of their induction that it will share information with parents/carers if the student is aged 18 years of age or under on the 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year they enrol.
- 4.2. The College is not able to disclose personal data (even to parents) if the student opted out at induction, or is aged 19 years of age or over, because of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act establishes a set of principles and conditions about the use and disclosure of personal data with which the College must comply; this means that the College cannot pass on information about its students unless it is permitted to do so under the Act.
- 4.3. In the event of a parent, or other relative approaching the College with a view to making a complaint on the student's behalf, the College cannot disclose personal data unless the student has given confirmation for the information to be released. However, if a student has consented to the release of information the College is happy to comply. The College will do this by asking the student to send an email from their College email account stating they are happy for us to speak with a specified person about a particular matter. With regards to students within the Progression Learning Curriculum, the Mental Capacity Act will be applied to determine whether a young person/adult under 24 years is able to understand and give consent.
- 4.4. Complaints of a minor nature should be raised immediately with any relevant employee. Issues will be addressed informally. Where issues cannot be resolved informally at point-of-origin, individuals may wish to make a formal complaint using the process outlined below:
  - The individual should lodge their formal complaint using either the Complaints Form available on the [TSCG website](#), in person, in writing, telephone call or to an employee who will be expected to complete one of these methods on their behalf.
- 4.5. All formal complaints will be acknowledged within one working day (were possible) using a standard template, the complaint will then be recorded on a central database and forwarded for investigation to the departmental Complaints Officer (for example, Head of Studies/Assistant Principal).
- 4.6. All formal complaints will be fully investigated and responded to within 10 working days (where further time to investigate is needed the manager will advise the complainant of this in writing and provide an explanation of the extension). The response will include relevant details about the investigation, conclusion, and any required corrective action.

The Quality Assurance Manager will be responsible for checking any response letters and issuing these on behalf of the College to the complainant, as well as advising of any additional means of communication.

- 4.7. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may appeal in writing to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, not previously involved in the case, who will investigate further and respond within 10 working days (where further time to investigate is needed the manager will advise the complainant of this in writing and provide an explanation of the extension).
- 4.8. The Investigating Manager will be responsible for forwarding a copy of any correspondence or investigation findings to the Quality Administrator along with the conclusion of the complaint whether **upheld or dismissed**.

Heads of Study will be expected to report on complaints through Progress Boards and will be expected to demonstrate how they can make necessary improvements to ensure no repeat occurrence. The Quality Assurance Manager will monitor and report outcomes to senior leaders.

## **5. Continuing a Complaint Beyond Trafford and Stockport College Group**

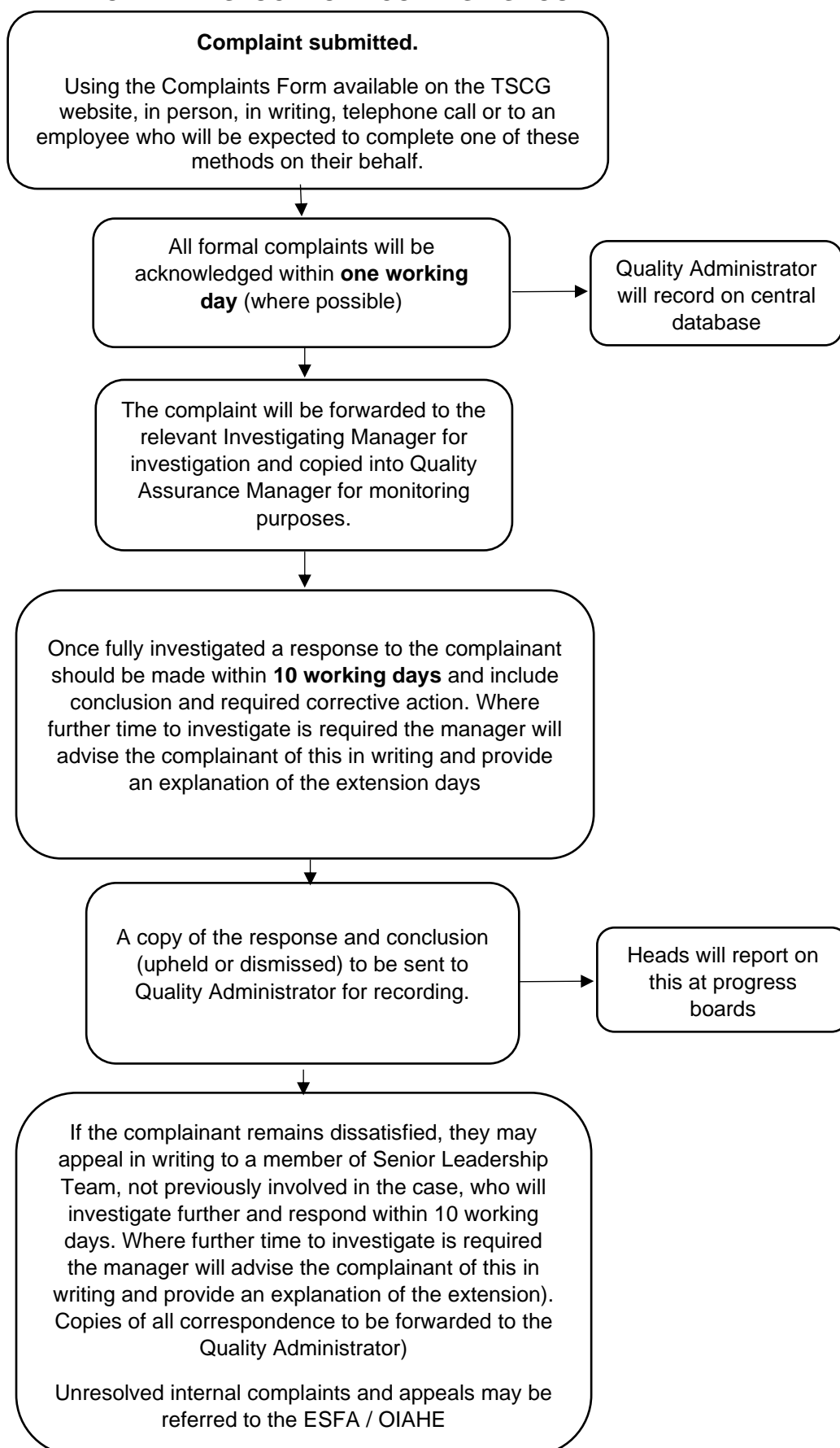
- 5.1. Once the complainant has exhausted the internal complaints process, and if a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved, the complainant has a right to complain to Trafford & Stockport College Group's regulatory body.
- 5.2. TSCG is regulated for the purposes of the Complaints Policy by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and as such complaints should be addressed to the ESFA Complaints Adjudicator.
- 5.3. Complainants should note that the Education and Skills Funding Agency will only take up a complaint when they are satisfied that the TSCG procedures as outlined in the policy, including appeal, has been exhausted, unless the Agency believes that TSCG is not dealing with handling a complaint appropriately or effectively, when it may intervene before the policy is exhausted.
- 5.4. Details on the Education and Skills Funding Agency complaints policy are outlined on their website(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>).
- 5.5. Unresolved complaints from current or former HE students relating to TSCG Higher Education may be raised as in 5.3 to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

## **6. Compliments**

- 6.1. Compliments should be made via the Contacts section on the TSCG website via the Complaints, Compliments and Incidents Form or in person to an employee who will be expected to complete the web-based form on their behalf.

## Appendix 1: Complaints Process

### TRAFFORD AND STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP



**Appendix 2: Complaints Form – [Link to On-line Form](#)**

(for illustration)

**TRAFFORD AND STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP COMPLAINTS FORM**

<b>The Complainant - About You?</b>	
<b>Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other):</b>	
<b>Full Name:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Contact Telephone Number:</b>	

<b>Do you want someone to support you? If so, who?</b>	
<b>Full Name:</b>	
<b>Are you happy for us to speak with this specified person about your complaint?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>How have you tried to resolve the issues so far?</b>	
<b>Which employees have you raised your concerns with?</b>	
<b>When did you raise your concerns with them?</b>	
<b>What was the outcome of their consideration and why do you remain dissatisfied?</b>	

<b>Summary of your complaint:</b>

**What would you like to see as the outcome to your complaint?**

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**Declaration:**

**I confirm that the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge and I give my consent for appropriate employees of Trafford and Stockport College Group to have access to the information provided in relation to this complaint.**

**Name:**

**Date:**

Data Protection and Privacy Statements are available on the TSCG website.