



**NEW  
COLLEGE  
LANARKSHIRE**

## **POLAR1 21 Complaints Handling Policy**

All College policies and procedures adhere to the guidelines and ethos of Equality and Diversity.

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## **1 Introduction**

New College Lanarkshire (NCL) is committed to providing opportunities for learning in a caring and supportive environment which respects the individual. At all stages of any complaints process, due consideration will be given to the individual needs of the learner as appropriate, taking cognisance of Equality Act (2010).

At all stages of the complaints process, the College will adhere to this Complaints Handling Policy, and will operate within the framework of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) Guide for Students has been produced and is available to learners on the College intranet and website.

## **2 Policy Statement**

New College Lanarkshire is committed to providing education and services of the highest quality. It aims to provide a supportive environment for our learners, to be responsive to concerns or complaints from any source and to use its CHP as a positive, non-threatening means for change to the benefit of all.

The College recognises that, in a complex organisation, problems may arise of a teaching-related or service-related nature. These problems need to be addressed in order to ensure that normal high standards are maintained. We regard feedback, both negative and positive, as a valuable resource to help us improve the quality of service provided by the College.

The CHP is designed to enable anyone interacting with the College to bring matters of concern about their experience of our services and provision to our attention and to enable investigation of those concerns to achieve satisfactory resolution. This process provides us with welcome feedback to help us improve our services generally, as well as helping us to resolve any particular problems experienced by an individual complainant.

The CHP aims to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved. It is based on the belief that complaints should be taken seriously, should be investigated promptly and dealt with as closely as possible to their origins. For this reason, all complainants are asked to try to resolve the issue as informally as possible in the first instance within the relevant faculty or support area. The intention is that most issues can be effectively handled locally, in a spirit of conciliation. The investigation stage of the CHP should be seen therefore as a last resort in the search for a solution.

As a listed authority within the meaning of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, the College is fully compliant with the provisions of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. Stakeholders who have taken the CHP to the investigation stage and who remain dissatisfied with the outcome can refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Information can be found at [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

### **3 Scope of the Policy**

The Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures may be used by learners, customers, visitors, partners or stakeholders of New College Lanarkshire. It covers any expression of dissatisfaction about standards of service, courses or facilities offered by the College, and the actions or lack of actions by the College or its staff.

The policy does not apply to matters covered by separate policies or procedures, including but not exclusively academic appeals and disciplinary issues.

### **4 Unacceptable Behaviour**

If the behaviour or actions of individuals using our service makes it very difficult for us to deal with their complaint, the College will consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Aggressive or abusive behavior
- Unreasonable demands
- Unreasonable refusal to co-operate
- Unreasonable use of the complaints process

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff is likely to result in a termination of all direct contact with the complainant and may result in incidents being reported to the police.

If a decision to restrict complainant contact is taken by the Senior Management Team, this will be recorded and included in the Annual Report to SPSO. The complainant will always be given the reason in writing as to why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and, if relevant, the length of time that these restrictions will be in place. This ensures that the complainant has a record of the decision.