



# Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Purpose and scope

As a part of our compliance with CQC regulations and good practice, Homefield College (the college) wishes to enable members of the public to make complaints to the college about anything related to the college, its activities or actions of staff, sub-contractors, students or residents and to enable the staff to deal with these complaints consistently and effectively to ensure all complainants feel their complaint has been listened too appropriately.

Homefield College strives for high standards in service delivery and welcomes feedback from students, parents/carers, individuals, intermediaries, charities and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our services. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

## 1. Policy

- A. The objectives of the Homefield College Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:
- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint/compliment will be handled
  - Ensure that complaints/compliments are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames
  - Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain/complement our work
  - Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our services.
- B. Homefield College will ensure that we:
- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
  - Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act
  - Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame or if the timeframe is not possible, inform the complainant of the reason
  - Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
  - Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence
  - Report to the college senior managers and the Board of Trustees, on a quarterly basis, the number of compliments and complaints received the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken.

## 2. Definition of a Complaint

A. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not. An individual may make a complaint if they feel Homefield College has:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Delayed in providing a service
- Made a mistake in the way it has provided a service
- Failed to act in a proper way
- Provided an unfair service

B. This policy and procedure relates only to complaints received about Homefield College and its services. Individuals who make complaints about partner organisations will be notified in writing within one working day of receipt of the complaint that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with and will be provided with contact details, where possible.

## 3. Our standards for handling complaints

A. We can receive complaints by letter, email, telephone or in person or alternatively if required by virtue of reasonable adjustments. We treat all complaints seriously.

- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness
- We will treat your complaint in confidence within the College, as far as is possible
- We will deal with your complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days where we have a return address and you can expect to have a full reply within 20 working days. In a few cases we will not be able to send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt, for example if your complaint is very complex, If this happens, we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full, keeping you fully informed of progress.
- Numbers of complaints and compliments will be recorded on the company data dashboard

B. We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:

- Sex or legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)
- Sexual orientation
- Colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality
- Disability
- Religion, political beliefs, or trade union affiliation
- Any other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties, age, pregnancy and maternity.

#### **4. Third Party Reporting**

- A. Complainants may wish to have a third party act on their behalf, a third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of, or making enquiries for the complainant. For example, third parties may include:
- Advice organisations
  - Professionals such as social workers, community nurses, doctors, solicitors etc.
  - Family members or friends
- B. Where a third party is helping a complainant with a particular complaint, we need written consent to that effect. Where we have this authority, we will endeavour to take all possible steps to keep the third party informed of progress on the complaint.
- C. We do not need written consent if a MP or elected Councillor is helping a constituent with a complaint, and we can disclose information to them in response to their enquiries, also, some lawyers and attorneys are legally empowered in certain circumstances to act on behalf of a complainant, and consent to disclose information is not required.

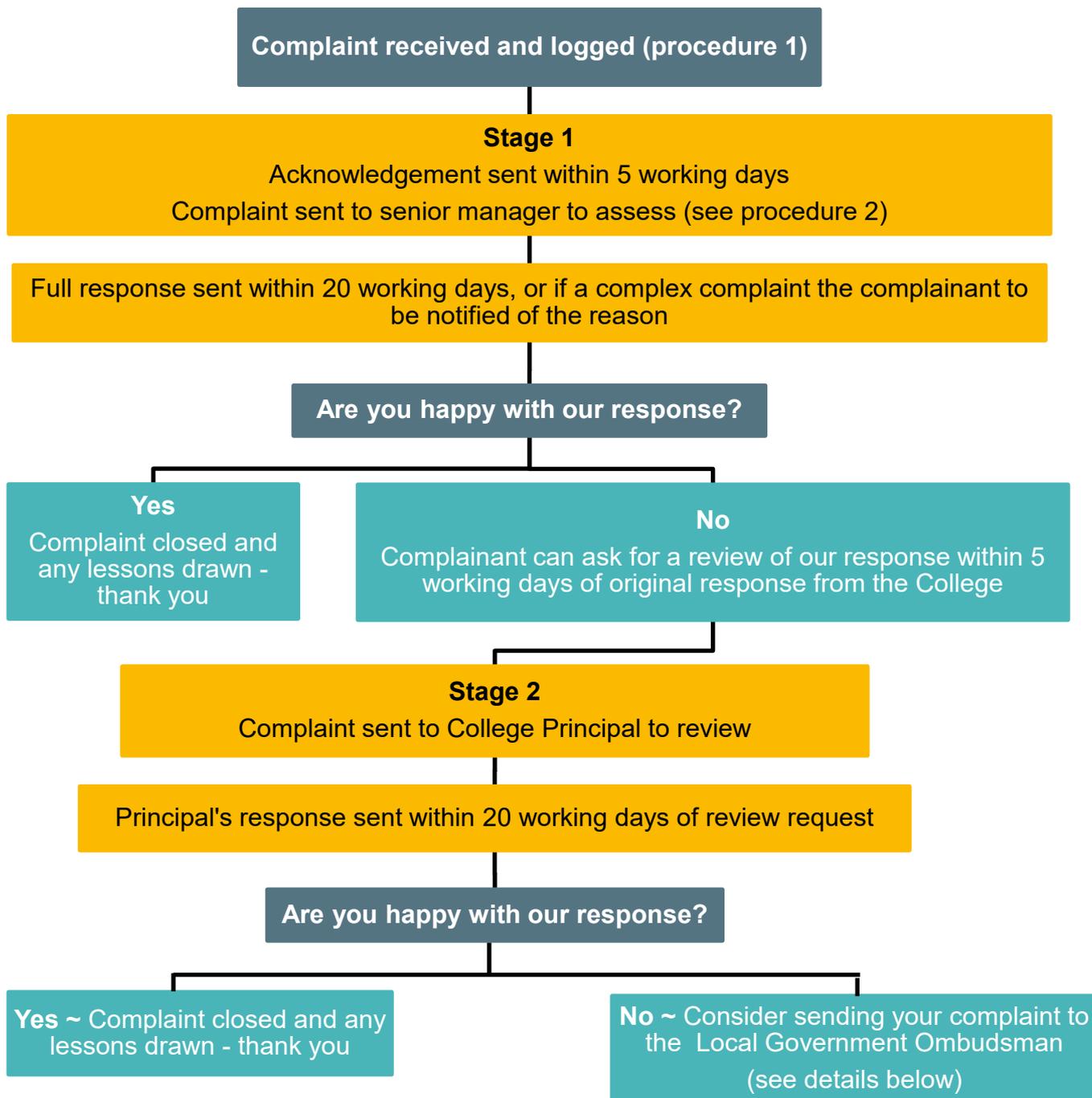
#### **5. Confidentiality**

- A. All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities, and/or as a result of statutory or legal obligations placed on the College.

#### **6. Making a Complaint**

- A. If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by
- Email
  - Telephone
  - Letter
  - In person
- B. If you are disabled, and need a reasonable adjustment to ensure you can register your complaint, you can contact us alternatively by:
- Telephone (one of our staff will help you by writing out your complaint)
  - Asking a member of staff to help you in writing out your complaint
- If you require different adjustments, please let us know and we will try and put those arrangements in place where we can.

## 7. How we will process and respond to your complaint



Local Government Ombudsman,  
PO Box 4771,  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH.

**Phone: 0300 061 0614.** More information can be found at: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

### **N.B Extending time limits**

We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received about the College within the timescales set out above, however, in a limited number of cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex or requires further breakdown, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case we will keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform you of next steps.

## 8. Data Protection

- A. To process a complaint, the College will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. The College will hold this data securely and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by the College, however it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.
- B. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, individuals have a right to obtain a copy of their personal data, however, there are exceptions to this right. The College will normally destroy its compliments and complaints files in a secure manner after the compliment has been made or the complaint closed according to the requirements of the body involved.

## 9. Reasonable adjustments and alternative formats

- A. The College is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our complaints policy easy to use and accessible to all of our customers. We will take reasonable steps to accommodate any reasonable adjustments you may have to enable you to access this policy or receive responses to complaints in other formats, and provide such assistance as you may reasonably require.

## 10. Monitoring

- A. Compliments and complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by other sources, will allow the College to learn about the services we provide, they provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them.
- B. To ensure the College can learn from compliments and complaints, the following data will be collected:

### **Compliments:**

- Name and address
- Nature of the compliment
- Date of compliment
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the compliment, if appropriate.

### **Complaints:**

- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response date

- Nature of complaint
  - Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint
  - Lessons learnt.
- C. Compliments and complaints information will be considered on a regular basis by the College Management Team and reported quarterly to the Trustee Board, wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

## 11. Procedures for staff

### A. Receiving and logging a complaint.

#### **Staff must:**

- Listen
- Assess and if required ask if they require any support in making a complaint
- How would they like to make the complaint, just by phone, in writing or do they require a meeting
- If in person ensure the person is comfortable and taken to a private place to raise their concerns
- Take down all details of complainant and tell them a copy of the complaint policy will be sent to them
- Record each issue raised
- Either complete notes or complete the complaints form if time allows, if completing notes transfer to complaints form afterwards (form on server)
- Accept the complainants interpretation, don't get defensive, make judgements or rush to make decisions on the spot
- Ensure clarity by asking them to repeat any areas you are unsure off
- At the end of their account repeat back to them the details you have recorded and ask them if it is correct, if in person get them to sign the form
- Explain that we take all complaints seriously and thank them for bringing the issue to our attention
- If possible ask and record the outcome they desire
- If immediate action can be taken i.e. remove cars, this should be done, if not
- Explain what will happen next and the timeframes involved (details above)
- Thank them for calling the College
- If the complaint is serious or requires immediate action contact a senior manager, safeguarding officer or the on call
- Ensure that complaint form is passed on to an appropriate senior manager
- Ensure that Linda Crump is notified of the complaint

### B. Complaint assessment for senior manager

#### **Senior manager must:**

- Respond to the initial complaint notification within 5 days in writing, enclosing a copy of the policy if requested.
  - Detailing the complaint
  - Apologising for the fact they have had to complain

- State who will be dealing with the complaint
- Confirm support for the person making the complaint
- Confirm how they want the complaint dealt with i.e. meeting, letter email etc.
- Confirm the action to be taken, investigation and by whom
- Confirm the agreed timeframe of 20 working days and inform them that any changes to that timeframe will be detailed to them
- Thank them for the information they have provided
- Respond to the complaint in writing detailing
  - The initial complaint made
  - What you have done in the investigation, what, where and when
  - Your decision concerning their complaint, where possible giving details of why you have reached that conclusion
  - Confirm to them any actions to be taken following the investigation and to prevent this occurrence in the future
  - Apologise if required
  - Give them contact details to discuss with you further if they are unsure of anything
  - Inform them of their right to appeal if you have not upheld their complaint and draw their attention to the policy, detailing stage 2 of the process and the contact details they might require
- Ensure that all paperwork for the complaint is sent to Linda Crump

## 12. Compliments

### A. Definition of a Compliment

- A compliment is any expression of satisfaction by an individual or organisation about any aspect of the colleges work either by staff or students.
- An individual may register a compliment for work carried out by the college in any area and for any reason, the college must record compliments and they can be received by email, letter, telephone, by individuals who are visiting the college or by individuals working with Homefield staff.

### B. Procedures for receiving a compliment

- Compliments received by email or letter should be recorded on a compliments form (on server) and the letter or email attached
- Compliment received over the phone or in person should be recorded on the compliments form and signed for by the staff member taking the compliment in person or on the telephone
- All compliment forms must be sent to Linda Crump for recording
- Linda Crump to report to the senior management team any staff members mentioned in compliments

C. All compliments and complaints information will be considered on a regular basis by the College Management Team and reported quarterly to the Trustee Board, wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service