

Plumpton College Complaints Procedure

Not satisfied with the service you have received? Then please tell us....

Staff at Plumpton College are concerned about the quality of provision provided. Your comments will help us to determine how good our service is, so that we can work towards continuous improvement.

**Go to reception and ask for a complaints form to complete
OR
follow the complaints procedure identified below.**

In the event of a complaints issue arising, it is hoped that this will be resolved amicably at the time of complaint. In the first instance, therefore, students and visitors to the College are advised to talk to the person concerned about the complaint. Often difficulties can be resolved when time is taken to talk an issue through.

Stage	Procedure	College's Response Time
1	Contact the person concerned or their immediate Line Manager and express your concerns.	24 hours
2	Should you not be satisfied with the response, write to or see one of the following: a) If it relates to student services, residential accommodation, catering or student social events: Student Services Manager. b) If it relates to teaching and learning: Deputy Principal (Academic & Quality). c) If it relates to College Buildings: Deputy Principal (Resources). d) If it relates to fees or other financial matters: Director of Finance & Administration.	48 hours
3	Should you not be satisfied with the response, write to the College Principal. (If you are unable to do this yourself, ask a member of staff to do this for you).	5 days
4	If you are still unhappy with the outcome, contact the Learning and Skills Council within three months of making the complaint at the address below: Learning and Skills Council Sussex Prince's House, 53 Queen Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 3XB If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, please contact Ofsted http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Factsheet-childcare-Concerns-and-complaints-about-childcare-providers	
<i>Note: At all stages of this procedure, complaints and the staff involved are required to record written details of the action taken in respect of the complaint.</i>		

Procedure for Handling Complaints

1. All formal complaints

1.1 As part of the College quality process, a system to deal with complaints is required. We hope that initially, complaints are dealt with between the complainant and a member of staff or a Line Manager. Where complaints are not resolved in this manner, recourse to the official procedure should be followed. This procedure will be placed on the College website.

1.1 *Process - Informal*

- The complainant raises the issue directly with the member of staff concerned and hopefully resolves the problem.
- The complainant makes a complaint to the Line Manager of the member of staff concerned.
- A response to this complaint is made within one working day by the Line Manager from his/her receipt of complaint. This complaint can be verbal or in writing.

1.3 If the issue is not resolved by the informal process above, the following process should be followed.

1.4 *Process - Formal*

- Complainant to make an appointment to see the Line Manager of the member of staff involved and completes an official complaint form (available from Reception).
- After a response from the Line Manager, it is hoped that the issue is resolved. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then the complaint should be referred as follows and the member of staff indicated will respond within two working days of receiving the complaint:
 - a) If it relates to student services, residential accommodation, catering or student social events: Student Services Manager. (If the Student Services Manager has already been involved then it should be referred to one of the Deputy Principals.)
 - b) If it relates to teaching and learning: Deputy Principal (Academic & Quality)
 - c) If it relates to College buildings: Deputy Principal (Resources)
 - d) If it relates to fees or other financial matters: Director of Finance & Administration.

1.5 If the complaint is not resolved, the complaint can then be taken to the College Principal to be resolved.

1.6 In some circumstances, people write directly to the Principal who will respond officially without going back to the beginning of the formal procedure. The Principal will aim to respond within five working days of receiving the complaint.

1.7 Should any complainant still not be satisfied with the way a complaint has been dealt with via the College (the provider), the Local Learning and Skills Council can be contacted.

2. The role of the Learning and Skills Council in the complaints procedure

2.1 Complaints about providers are dealt with by the relevant local Learning and Skills Council.

2.2 The address of the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is:

Learning and Skills Council Sussex
Prince's House
53 Queen Street
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 3XB
Telephone Number: 0845 019 4184

2.3 The Council is there to ensure that the provider's procedures are working effectively. The Council will review the processes the provider has gone through when dealing with any complaint and the decisions that have been made.

2.4 The types of complaint that the Learning and Skills Council **can consider** are:

- **Quality** – teaching and learning, resources, accommodation.
- **Unreasonable action** – when the provider does not do what it says it will do, and does not follow its own procedures, including its complaints procedure.
- **Health and safety** – situations which may put learners at risk of injury or harm.

(In all the above cases, however, the complaint should be made to the provider in the first instance).

- **Lack of provision of a particular course** – in the local area, not necessarily at your nearest provider.

2.5 The types of complaint that the Learning and Skills Council **cannot consider** are:

- **Course content or grades** – these complaints should be referred to the examination body or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.
- **Personal complaints about providers' staff** – these are a matter between the complainant and the provider's management team.
- **Issues not about learning** – complaints such as planning issues, noise and disturbance, or contractual disputes.
- **Matters which are the subject of legal action** – the Council cannot become involved in matters subject to legal action, or where legal proceedings are the most appropriate way of resolving the dispute.
- **Employment matters** – where a complaint is about an individual's employment with a provider.

2.6 In all cases, the local Learning and Skills Council will try to point persons in the right direction, if they are not able to deal with a complaint.

- 2.7 Complaints can be made about any provider that the Learning and Skills Council funds. However, the Council cannot deal with complaints about universities, schools, or local education authorities.

3. How to make a complaint

- 3.1 Before contacting the LSC, the provider's complaints procedure should first be exhausted. If this does not provide a satisfactory outcome, the local LSC should be contacted. This should be done within three months of making the complaint against the provider. (This means three months from when the provider's complaints procedure is exhausted and cannot be investigated further.) The reason for this is that it can be difficult to fairly investigate complaints that are older than this.

4. What the local Learning and Skills Council will do

- 4.1 The local Learning and Skills Council will usually require that a complaint is made in writing to them. However, in some cases, they will register complaints over the telephone or arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint. The investigation of a complaint will be overseen by a senior manager at the local Learning and Skills Council.
- 4.2 In the majority of cases, the Council will need to identify the complainant to the provider. This will greatly help them in investigating individual complaints. The LSC will, however, check with the complainant before doing this.
- 4.3 The Council will encourage the complainant and the provider to reach an agreement on the complaint. If this is not possible, they will investigate the way in which the provider has dealt with the complaint, and whether their conclusions are reasonable and justified. The LSC does not investigate a complaint on an individual's behalf, or aims to substitute its own judgement for that of the provider, but seeks to ensure that any complaint is dealt with properly.
- 4.4 If any complaint received is justified, the Council may make recommendations to the provider to prevent the situation happening again. These recommendations will be followed up by the local Learning and Skills Council during provider visits.

5. Allegations of irregularity or suspected fraud

- 5.1 The LSC has a team dedicated to investigating allegations of irregularities or suspected fraud by providers called the Special Investigations Unit. Unlike complaints, it may not be possible for allegations or irregularity to have been raised with the provider before contacting the LSC.
- 5.2 The LSC will investigate allegations such as fraud, financial irregularity and other malpractice where there is a public interest in the allegation being made. Any concerns should be addressed to the Chief Internal Auditor at the LSC national office or alternatively, the local Council will pass concerns on.



COMPLAINTS

Plumpton College welcomes observations on any aspects of the service it provides. The complaints procedure is designed to ensure that grievances are treated fairly. Should an issue not be resolved following personal consultation, a formal complaint may be made. Making a formal complaint (by completing this form), will not affect the complainant's statutory rights. (If you are unable to complete this form yourself, please ask a member of staff or another student to do this for you.)

Please complete this form in black ink using block capitals.

<i>Name of person making the complaint:</i>	<i>Address:</i> <i>Telephone number:</i> <i>Email address:</i>
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Nature of the complaint. Please identify what you complaining about. (Continue on separate sheet if necessary.)	
Date your complaint relates to:	

What action would you like the College to take?	
Who is involved?	
Have you spoken to the person directly involved?	Yes No
If 'yes', what was their response?	
If 'no', please give the reason why haven't you spoken to them?	
Signature:	Date:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Nature of the complaint (please tick as appropriate):

academic issue

advice given

catering

facilities

finance related

information given (documentation)

other (please state what)

Status of the complainant:

student

relative of student

employer

visitor

other (please specify)

Action taken:

By whom:

Related dates:

Date recorded:

By whom: