**POLICY:** Quality Policy

**PURPOSE:**

* 1. The College believes it is in everyone’s interest to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, as close to the source of the problem as possible, and by informal means in preference to formal ones.

1.2 The College aims to ensure that all complaints are received and dealt with promptly, fairly, professionally and in a non-discriminatory manner.

1.3 The College will ensure appropriate action is taken to resolve issues and will endeavour to prevent similar occurrences.

**SCOPE:**

2.1 This Policy applies to complaints from any learner, apprentice or external stakeholder who wishes to express dissatisfaction with an aspect of the College’s activities.

2.2 Any allegation made against a member of staff/volunteer regarding abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) or neglect, made in the form of a complaint, will be dealt with under the Learner Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection Policy

2.3 A separate Grievance Procedure exists for staff.

2.4 A complaint must be made within 3 months of the event that gave rise to it.

**PROCEDURE:**

**3.1 Complaints from Learners and/or Apprentices**

3.1.1 The College endeavours to deliver high standards at all times to its learners. Learners and Apprentices may complain about any aspects of the College’s activities.

3.1.2 It is expected that day-to-day concerns will be resolved promptly and informally between a learner/apprentice and his/her subject or personal tutor.

3.1.3 When it is felt that an issue has not been resolved, is of a sufficiently serious nature, or could result in a financial refund, the learner should submit a formal complaint on the appropriate form [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=23M781_e7UGQi-f-eRuTlgy_pdVof1lJmMs1J1trUeVUNzNYVEZZMFhDVlpaTEtYUVpUTEg3QllPNS4u) (Appendix 1, also accessed via [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=23M781_e7UGQi-f-eRuTlgy_pdVof1lJmMs1J1trUeVUNzNYVEZZMFhDVlpaTEtYUVpUTEg3QllPNS4u)) to customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk. Any formal complaint received by a Head of Learning must be forwarded to customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk. Complaints logged via the online form are automatic, for complaints received via paper copy at reception or with admin staff or via telephone to reception or admin staff, the receiver should log this on the form and submit any paper copies to Quality (B20 Burslem).

3.1.4 Learners/apprentices may approach Heads of Learning if they require assistance in formulating or writing their complaint or for any other support or guidance. This should be logged via the online form.

3.1.5 The Quality Department will normally acknowledge the complaint within three working days of its receipt. It will then be forwarded to the appropriate manager for investigation. After investigating the complaint a response will normally be sent within 15 working days. If for any reason there is a delay in the response time then the complainant will be advised.

3.1.6 If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the learner and he/she wishes to appeal, the complainant should contact the Quality team directly in writing customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk or Quality Department, Burslem Campus, Moorland Road, Stoke on Trent, ST6 1JJ. An appeal must be made within five days of receipt of the response to the complaint. The appeal will normally be acknowledged within three working days of its receipt and will be referred to the Executive team where required. After investigating the appeal a response will normally be sent within fifteen working days. If for any reason there is a delay in the response time the learner will be advised.

3.1.7 If the College’s complaints procedure has been exhausted and the learner is still not satisfied he/she will be directed appropriate agency.

**For Further Education Learners and Apprentices this is the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA):**

The address for the ESFA is:-

Education Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Complaints received by an external funding body or arbitration service (e.g. Education Skills Funding Agency or Department for Work and Pensions) will be referred to the Chief Executive for investigation.

**For Higher Education students this is Staffordshire University:**

Learners on a course validated by Staffordshire University who remain dissatisfied may submit their complaint to the University:

<https://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/complaints_procedure_tcm44-26818.pdf>

If a student is still unhappy with the outcome Higher Edcucation students can contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

3.1.8 Some aspects of the College’s work are also governed by the complaints procedures of other external organisations. In the case of awarding organisations, the examinations team will advise learners of the procedure to be followed.

3.1.9 The appropriate senior manager will investigate complaints relating to the personal conduct or actions of one of their managers. In the case of a complaint against the

Principal, the matter will be directed to the Chair of the Corporation Board. Complaints about individual governors should be addressed in the first instance to the Clerk to the Corporation.

3.1.10 The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious. Where the College deems this to be the case, the complainant or appellant will be informed in writing.

3.1.11 Complaints may be made on behalf of learners/apprentices by third parties, for example where a parent wishes to complain on behalf of their child or an employer wishes to complain on behalf of an employee. Where the learner is over 18 years of age the College will make contact with the learner to confirm that they are happy for the third party to complain on their behalf before logging and investigating the complaint.

**3.2. External complaints**

3.2.1 It is expected that day-to-day concerns will be resolved promptly and informally.

3.2.2. Any person other than a member of staff or a learner, who is dissatisfied about any aspect of the College’s activities, should submit a formal complaint to the Quality Department via completion of the appropriate form [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=23M781_e7UGQi-f-eRuTlgy_pdVof1lJmMs1J1trUeVUNzNYVEZZMFhDVlpaTEtYUVpUTEg3QllPNS4u) (Appendix 1, also accessed via [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=23M781_e7UGQi-f-eRuTlgy_pdVof1lJmMs1J1trUeVUNzNYVEZZMFhDVlpaTEtYUVpUTEg3QllPNS4u)). Any formal complaint received by a Manager must be forwarded to customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk. The complaint will normally be acknowledged within three working days of receipt. It will then be forwarded to and investigated by the appropriate manager. After investigating the complaint a response will normally be sent within 15 working days. If for any reason there is a delay in the response time the complainant will be advised.

3.2.3 If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant and he/she wishes to appeal, the complainant should contact the Quality team directly in writing customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk or Quality Department, Burslem Campus, Moorland Road, Stoke on Trent, ST6 1JJ. An appeal must be made within five days of receipt of the response to the complaint. The appeal will normally be acknowledged within three working days of its receipt and will be referred to the Executive team where required. After investigating the appeal a response will normally be sent within fifteen working days. If for any reason there is a delay in the response time the learner will be advised.

3.2.4 If the College’s complaints procedure has been exhausted and the complainant is still not satisfied they will be directed to the Skills Funding Agency.

3.2.5 The appropriate senior manager will investigate complaints that relate to the personal conduct or actions of one of their managers. In the case of a complaint against the Principal, the matter will be directed to the Chair of the Corporation Board. Complaints about individual governors should be addressed in the first instance to the Clerk to the Corporation.

3.2.6 The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious. Where the College deems this to be the case, the complainant or appellant will be informed in writing.

**4. MONITORING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL**

4.1 Managers must provide written details of the action taken and the outcome of the complaint and forward a copy of this, with supporting documents to customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk

4.2 If interviews are deemed necessary the investigating officer should have another member of staff present in all meetings with parties involved. To request a member of the Quality team be present during an interview, an email should be sent to customersatisfaction@stokecoll.ac.uk.

4.3 College staff have the right to terminate any meeting or interview, if they feel that the behaviour of any of the parties is inappropriate.

4.4 The Principal will monitor the overall operation of the procedure to ensure that it is effective.

4.5 The Quality team will hold half-termly meetings with Heads of Learning and Business Support managers to discuss and log informal complaints that they may have received where these have not been forwarded to Quality.

4.6 The Quality team is responsible for reporting all formal complaints termly to the Senior Leadership team and to the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee of the Corporation Board. Reports will analyse trends, including issues related to discrimination and diversity, recommend actions and maintain the confidentiality of the complainants.

**Appendix 1 – Formal Complaint Form**



