



**Dumfries and
Galloway College**

One step ahead

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS HANDLING REPORT, ACADEMIC YEAR 24-25

Performance Team

September 2025

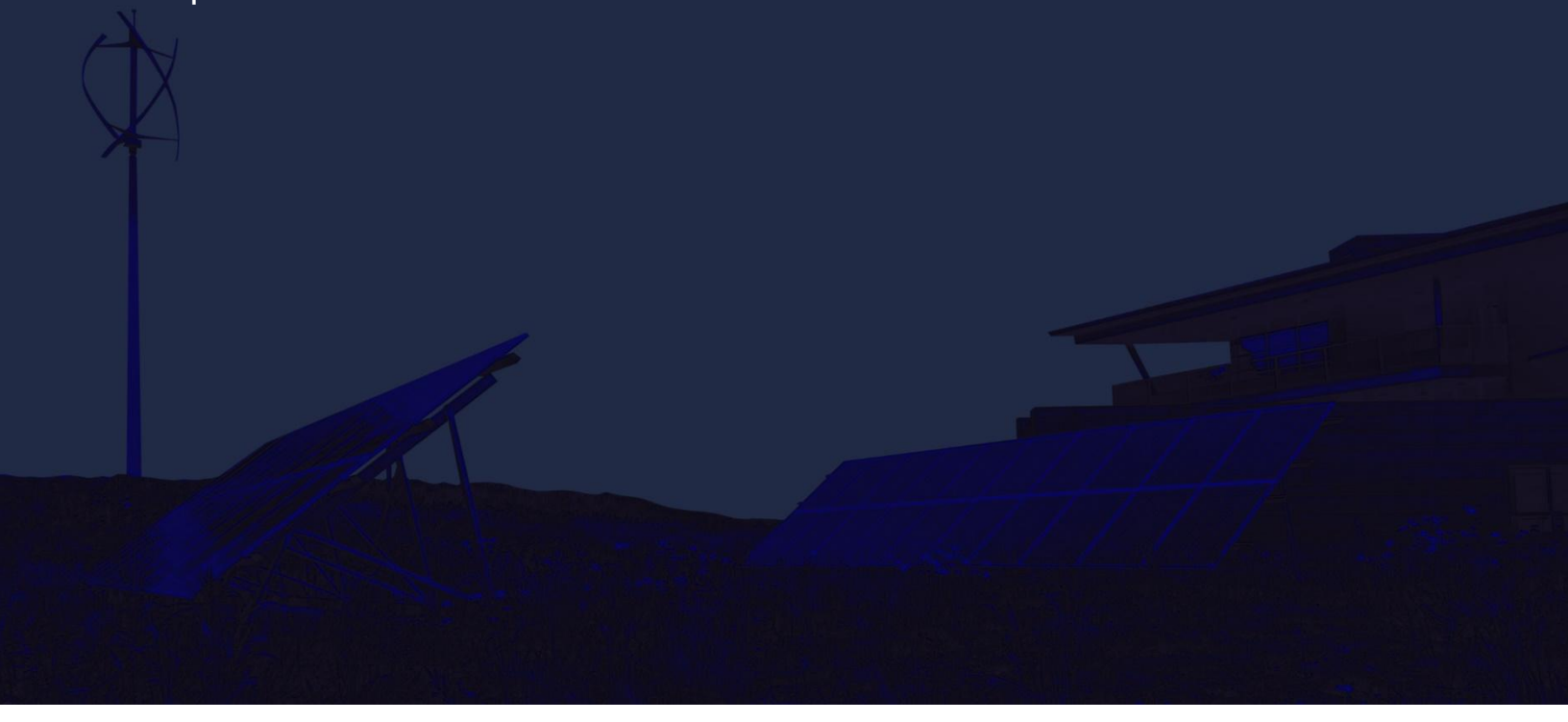


Table of Contents

Annual Complaints Handling Report Academic Year 2024-2025.....	2
1. The Purpose of the Report.....	2
2. Background to the Report.....	2
3. Key Observations.....	4
4. The Report	5
Indicator One: The total number of complaints received	6
Indicator Two: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days	8
Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage	8
Indicator Four: The outcome of complaints at each stage.....	9
Customer satisfaction with complaints process	10
Learning from Complaints: Service Delivery Improvements	12

Annual Complaints Handling Report

Academic Year 2024–2025

1. *The Purpose of the Report*

This report aims to provide an overview on the efficiency of our complaint handling process, providing an insight into continuous service improvement.

2. *Background to the Report*

The College is required to comply with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) Model Complaints Handling Procedure and report annually on our performance in handling complaints. It is also part of our duties under Freedom of Information legislation.

This analysis includes statistics in relation to the volume and type of complaints, as well as key performance details.

Complaint reporting

- 🔧 **Quarterly Reports:** Prepared by the Performance Team for the purpose of review by Senior Management.
- 🔧 **Annual Report:** Prepared by the Performance Team for the purpose of review by Senior Management, Executive Leadership Team and approved by the College Board of Management. Report is published on the College Website.

Complaints received by Category and Complaint Outcomes

The College has adopted the standardised Complaint Categories developed by the College Development Network's Complaint Handling Advisory Group:

- 🔧 Customer Care
- 🔧 Applications, Admission and Progression
- 🔧 Course Related
- 🔧 Services
- 🔧 Facilities
- 🔧 Others

There are four outcome categories to be reported against for Indicator 4 (The outcome of complaints at each stage):

- 🔧 Upheld (where the College is at fault)
- 🔧 Not upheld (where the College is not at fault)
- 🔧 Partially upheld (where some of the points of complaints are upheld and others are not)
- 🔧 Resolved – A complaint is resolved when both (the organisation) and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld

3. *Key Observations*

- 👉 The overall number of complaints has decreased significantly from 41 to 30.
- 👉 The number of Stage 1 complaints has decreased, 14 for session 24-25 compared to 22 in Session 23-24
- 👉 There is a slight decrease in the number of Stage 2 complaints, 16 for Session 24-25 compared to 19 in Session 23-24
- 👉 Complaints per 100 population dropped from 0.85% to 0.62%
- 👉 Stage 1 and 2 complaints were most frequent in Q2 (7 Stage 1s and 7 stage 2s)
- 👉 The number of complaints closed in full at Stage 1 within 5 working days decreased, 71% for 24-25 compared to 86% for 23-24, with the average time to close being 4.21 days
- 👉 The number of complaints closed in full at Stage 2 within 20 working days decreased by 26% (53% for 24-25 which is a significant decline on the 79% closure rate for 23-24), with the average time to close being 26.4 days.
- 👉 Escalations from Stage 1 to Stage 2 were minimal, with 1 case in Session 2024-25, 1 less from the previous session
- 👉 The number of Stage 1 complaints Upheld increased by 13%
- 👉 The number of Stage 1 complaints Partially Upheld remained the same (0%)
- 👉 The number of Stage 1 complaints Not Upheld decreased by 6%
- 👉 The number of Stage 1 complaints Resolved decreased by 6%
- 👉 The number of Stage 2 complaints Upheld increased by 50%
- 👉 The number of Stage 2 complaints Partially Upheld increased by 20%
- 👉 The number of Stage 2 complaints Not Upheld increased by 30%
- 👉 The number of Stage 2 complaints Resolved decreased by 42%

4. *The Report*

This report covers the period 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025. In this period there were 14 frontline complaints (Stage 1*) and 16 complaints requiring a full investigation (Stage 2**). 1 complaint was escalated to Stage 2.

* complaints that are straightforward, requiring little or no investigation

** complaints that are complex, serious or 'high risk and where the customer is not satisfied with the frontline response

2024-2025 Performance Indicators 1 – 4

Indicator One: The total number of complaints received

1	Quantitative Indicator	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
1.1	Number of complaints received	30	41	51
1.2	Number of complaints received per 100 population as a %	0.62%	0.85%	0.99%

Fewer complainants (30) utilised the complaint handling procedure in Session 24-25 than in session 23-24. The number of complainants utilising the complaint handling procedure has reduced over three consecutive sessions.

Breakdown of Complaints	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Stage 1 Number of complaints received	14	22	22
Stage 2 Number of complaints received	16	19	29
Stage 1 Number of complaints escalated to Stage 2	1	2	1

There is a notable decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints, 14 for session 24-25 compared to 22 in Session 23-24. A slight decrease was noted for Stage 2 complaints, 16 for Session 24-25 compared to 19 for Session 23-24.

Escalations from Stage 1 to Stage 2

One escalation was noted for Session 24-25, which is comparable to the two previous sessions.

Breakdown of Complaint Categories per Academic Session	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Stage 1			
Customer Care	2	5	2
Applications, Admission, Progression	1	2	4
Course Related	8	10	7
Services	2	4	4
Facilities	1	1	5
Stage 2			
Customer Care	7	10	12
Applications, Admission, Progression	0	1	8
Course related	9	6	7
Services	0	2	1
Facilities	0	0	1
Escalated Complaints			
Applications, Admission, Interview, Enrolment	0	0	1

Course related	0	2	0
Services	1	0	0

For stage 1 complaints 57.1% were course related, with a reduction (-2) noted in comparison to the number received in session 23-24. All other categories also noted a reduction in the number of complaints received.

Stage 2 complaints also noted the highest percentage for the course related category, 56.3% (9 complaints). An increase (+3) was noted on comparison to session 23-24 . The remaining 43.8% was in relation to customer care complaints, a reduction (-3) was noted on comparison to session 23-24.

Analysis shows that 6 Stage 2 complaints received had a common theme, all others were isolated and do not pertain to any one key area or team within the college.

Child Friendly Complaints	Quantity
Stage 1 Number of Child Friendly complaints received	0
Stage 2 Number of Child Friendly complaints received	2
Escalated Complaints Number of Child Friendly complaints received	0

Breakdown of Complaints per Quarter	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Stage 1			
Quarter 1 (August – October)	1	11	8
Quarter 2 (November – January)	7	6	7
Quarter 3 (February – April)	2	2	2
Quarter 4 (May – July)	4	3	5
Stage 1 Total Number of complaints received	14	22	22
Stage 2			
Quarter 1 (August – October)	2	5	12
Quarter 2 (November – January)	7	6	6
Quarter 3 (February – April)	2	4	7
Quarter 4 (May – July)	5	4	4
Stage 2 Total Number of complaints received	16	19	29
Escalated Complaints			
Quarter 1 (August – October)	0	2	1
Quarter 2 (November – January)	0	0	0
Quarter 3 (February – April)	0	0	0
Quarter 4 (May – July)	1	0	0
Escalated Complaints Total Number	1	2	1

Analysing the number of complaints received per quarter, we note a considerable decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints received in Quarter 1 (1 complaint), 11 were received in 23-24 and 8 received in 22-23. This is attributed to the industrial action which took place in the two previous sessions, with resulting being delayed and awarding body certificates were not issued.

The number of Stage 2 complaints received each quarter are comparable to session 23-24, with only slight variances.

Stage 1 escalations remained rare, with only 1 occurring in Q4 of Session 24-25. This complaint was escalated to Stage 2 due to timescale, as further investigation could not be completed within the 5 working day Stage 1 timeframe due to staff annual leave.

Breakdown of Complaints per Complainant Category	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Stage 1			
Current Student	8	12	18
Former Student	0	6	1
Parent/Carer	1	4	1
Business Client	4	0	0
Service User	1	0	1
Visitor/Member of the Public	0	2	0
Stage 1 Total Number of complaints received	14	24	21
Stage 2			
Current Student	9	13	19
Former Student	1	1	4
Parent/Carer	2	6	5
Business Client	3	1	1
Service User	0	0	0
Visitor/Member of the Public	0	0	1
Stage 2 Total Number of complaints received	15	21	30

The majority of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints are received from current students.

Indicator Two: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days

2	Quantitative Indicator	24-25		23-24		22-23	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2.1	Number of complaints closed in full at stage 1 within five working days as % of all stage 1 complaints responded to in full	10	71%	19	86%	15	68%
2.2	The number of complaints closed in full at stage 2 within 20 working days as % of all stage 2 complaints responded to in full	8	53%	15	79%	17	59%
2.3	The number of complaints closed in full after escalation within 20 working days as % of all complaints responded to in full after escalation.	1	100%	2	100%	1	100%

The number of Stage 1 complaints closed in full within the five working days decreased by 15% (71% for 24-25 compared to 86% for 23-24). Communication issues and late responses from complainants impacted on the timescale adherence. For next session staff will be reminded on the importance of complaint resolution within 5 days for Stage 1 complaints.

Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed at stage 1

100% of stage 1 complaints were closed off. 71% were closed within the 5 working day timescale, with 29% taking longer than the 5 working day timescale to close off.

The number of complaints closed in full at Stage 2 within 20 working days noted a significant decrease of 26% for Stage 2 complaints (53% for 24-25 which is a significant decline on the 79% closure rate for 23-24). Complex complaints and staff and complainant holidays impacted on the timescale adherence. For next session staff will be reminded on the importance of complaint resolution within 20 days for Stage 2 complaints.

Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed at stage 2

100 % were closed off. 53% were closed within the 20 working day timescale, with 47% taking longer than the 20 working day timescale to close off.

Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

Quantitative Indicator		Average time in working days 2024-2025	Average time in working days 2023-2024	Average time in working days 2022-2023
3.1	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1	4.21	3.75	3.81
3.2	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2	26.4	15.15	18.83
3.3	Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	4	10.5	9

In accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure the target for resolution of Stage 1 complaints is 5 days and Stage 2 complaints is 20 days.

In 2024-25 the average time in working days to close a Stage 1 complaint was 4.21 days (3.75 days in Session 23-24, and 3.81 days in Session 22-23). In 2024-25 the average time in working days to close a Stage 2 complaint was 26.4 days (15.15 days in Session 23-24, and 18.83 days in Session 22-23). For both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints we note an increase in the average time to respond to complaints.

For the escalated complaint the resolution time is notably less than the two previous sessions.

Indicator Four: The outcome of complaints at each stage

	Quantitative Indicator	Upheld			Partially Upheld			Not Upheld			Resolved		
		24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23
4.1	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed at stage 1	4 (31%)	4 (18%)	10 (48%)	0 0%	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	1 (8%)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)	8 (62%)	15 (68%)	6 (29%)
4.2	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints	9 (50%)	0 (0%)	10 (34%)	3 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	3 (20%)	11 (58%)	7 (24%)	0 (0%)	8 (42%)	11 (38%)

	closed at stage 2												
4.3	Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed after escalation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)

***A complaint is resolved when both (the organisation) and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld.

The number of Stage 1 complaints Upheld increased by 13% from Session 23-24 to Session 24-25 (although the number of complaints remains at 4). The number of complaints Resolved in Session 24-25 decreased by 7% from Session 23-24 (from 15 to 8).

The number of Upheld complaints in 24-25 increased by 50% (0% in 23-24) and by 16% on comparison to Session 22-23.

Number of complaints as a % of all complaints closed after escalation

100% of complaints were closed after escalation.

In summary, the number of complaints has decreased overall, with a decrease in complaint handling times for both Stage 1 and Stage 2, and a higher percentage of complaints being upheld within set deadlines, particularly for Stage 2 complaints.

Customer satisfaction with complaints process

To ensure compliance with the College Complaints Handling Procedure we requested feedback from complainants regarding their satisfaction with the service they received, and not the circumstances or outcome of their actual complaint. They were asked to evaluate the service considering the following points:

- 👉 Whether the complaints process was easy to access
- 👉 Whether they received a prompt acknowledgement of their complaint
- 👉 Whether they were dealt with courteously at all times

- Whether their complaint was thoroughly investigated
- Whether they received a fair and clear response and within an appropriate timescale

For session 24-25 a survey (via Microsoft Forms platform) was utilised for a third consecutive session. This allowed the team to easily produce quantitative data for several outcomes. It was anticipated that complainants would find this approach to providing feedback much easier and be encouraged to respond. However, responses continue to be low. We will continue to monitor the feedback on a regular basis and identify areas where this can be improved.

Response rates for the three sessions are provided below:

Response rates for CHP feedback	24-25	23-24	22-23
Number of responses received	6 (30%)	8 (20%)	14 (28%)
Response method	Microsoft Forms	Microsoft Forms	Microsoft Forms

Despite there being a decrease in the number of responses provided, we can reflect on the responses for Session 24-25 outcomes as indicated in the table below:

Complaint Handling Point	Strongly Agree			Agree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
	24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23	24-25	23-24	22-23
Session:												
I found the complaints process easy to access	1 (16.7%)	3 (35.7%)	5 (35.7%)	6 (66.7%)	3 (35.7%)	7 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I received a prompt acknowledgement of my complaint	1 (16.7%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (21.4%)	5 (83.3%)	5 (62.5%)	9 (64.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I was dealt with courteously at all times	2 (33.3%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (21.4%)	4 (66.7%)	4 (50.0%)	11 (78.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
I found my complaint was thoroughly investigated	1 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	6 (42.9%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (12.5%)	5 (35.7%)		1 (12.5%)	1 (7.1%)
I received a fair and clear response to my complaint, within an appropriate timescale	1 (16.7%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (21.4%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (25.0%)	6 (42.9%)	3 (50%)	3 (37.5%)	5 (35.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

We are satisfied that the complaints handling procedure is easily accessible with the combined response rate for Strongly Agree and Agree being 83.4% (Session 24-25), 75.0% (Session 23-24) and 85.7% (Session 22-23). The various methods by which a complaint can be submitted attributes to this.

For the most part, the above responses demonstrate that the complainants were in agreement overall with the handling of their complaints. The combined responses for Strongly Agree and Agree were as follows:

Complaint Handling Point	Combined response for Strongly Agree & Agree		
	24-25	23-24	22-23
I received a prompt acknowledgement of my complaint	100%	75.0%	85.7%
I was dealt with courteously at all times	100%	87.5%	100%
I found my complaint was thoroughly investigated	66.7%	75.0%	57.2%
I received a fair and clear response to my complaint, within an appropriate timescale	50%	62.2%	64.3%

A Positive comment was received regarding the complaints handling process, which included: *We were not initially aware of the procedure, however, once we had been made aware of it, the process was logical and the procedure was implemented and carried out in a professional way.*

There are improvements to be made, particularly in relation to ensuring that complainants are provided with a full and thorough response, which addresses all aspects of their complaint. Where complainants noted dissatisfaction with areas of the complaints handling process, a follow-up email was issued asking for feedback on how their complaint could have been handled differently. No further correspondence was received from any of the complaints who indicated dissatisfaction. Any feedback from complainants will be considered and used to improve service delivery where possible.

Learning from Complaints: Service Delivery Improvements

By recording and analysing complaints data we can identify and address the causes of complaints and, where appropriate, identify training opportunities and introduce service improvements.

Following complaints received in Academic Year 2024-25, service delivery has been improved in the following areas:

Quarter 1

Course Management

Classroom management and health and safety observations will be closely monitored in Engineering workshops.

Quarter 2

Campus facilities

Regular monitoring of Stranraer car park to ensure users of car park are not misusing the disabled parking spaces.

Staff Conduct

Equality and Diversity Training will be undertaken by a member of the canteen staff to enhance their customer service skills.

Workbased learning

For workbased learning, a RAG rating system will be implemented for the one-to-one progress sessions between the assessor and their line manager, where candidate will be reviewed based on percentage completed in their online portfolio against target.

Quarter 3

Short Courses

Due to a less than satisfactory experience with a short course we acknowledged issues around the course provision and provided compensation to the business client. The issues were addressed to ensure there were no concerns regarding any future provision.

Quarter 4

Student Journey – Student applications

Following a complaint concerning the delay in processing an application the Student Journey Manager is reviewing staff cover during the summer break. This will ensure that all applications, regardless of when they are received will be processed timeously.

SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman)

No complaints relating to Dumfries and Galloway College were submitted to SPSO during Academic Session 2024-2025.

The Performance Team, September 2025