

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Document Control

Reference: ISPOL1901011E

Version: 6

Review Date: 31/07/2029

Approval Level: Q&S Committee

Author: Tracy Chandra

Approver: Rachel Turner

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg | This document is available in Welsh

Scope and Application

At Pembrokeshire College we strive to provide the best possible service to you: our learners, customers and community. Taking account of and learning from your views enables us to continually improve the quality of our provision and services. We listen to your views in many ways such as learner surveys and meetings, employer surveys, compliments, complaints and concerns for improvement. We recognise that there are occasions when we do not always get it right and we need to hear from you if this is the case, so we can put steps in place for improvement. The purpose of this policy is to outline our concerns/complaints management process and explain how you can complain or raise a concern, and to outline how to let us know we have done something well.

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1. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities associated with **complaints** are outlined in the table below:

Role	Responsibilities
College employees	➤ To liaise with the relevant manager and respond quickly to concerns or complaints as quickly as practicable at the initial point of contact. ➤ To advise the Designated Complaints Officer of any concerns or complaints received.
Contract and Compliance Manager	➤ The Contract and Compliance Manager has the role of the Designated Complaints Officer responsible for the appropriate handling of all complaints.
Senior Complaints Officer	➤ The Director of Learner Journey and the senior manager responsible for complaints and hearing appeals.
Curriculum Area/Department Manager	➤ Responsible for initially reviewing any concerns in their faculty for actions for improvement.
Head of Faculty/Department	➤ Responsible for investigating anything that the Curriculum Area Manager/Department Manager cannot for any reason resolve.
Human Resources and Payroll Manager	➤ Responsible for overseeing HR policies as part of the complaints process and for ensuring consistency of approach to complaints by managers across College.
Designated Senior Lead Safeguarding & Learner Wellbeing	➤ Responsible for overseeing the Safeguarding Policy and dealing with complaints in relation to Safeguarding.
Welsh Language Development Officer	➤ Responsible for overseeing Welsh language policies and dealing with complaints in relation to the Welsh language.

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2. How do you let us know when we have done something well?

- 2.1 If you wish to let us know about any aspects of our service or employees that you are pleased with then you can let us know by:

Email:

aspire@pembrokeshire.ac.uk

Write to:

Contract and Compliance Manager
Pembrokeshire College
Merlins Bridge
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1SZ

We will share your compliment with the related staff member or department and their line manager and we will record them for continual improvement purposes.

- 2.2 We may use the compliments in marketing material and, if we do, we will anonymise them.

3. General Principles

- 3.1 You can complain in either English or Welsh and complaints received in Welsh will be responded to in Welsh.
- 3.2 The methods to complain are outlined in section 10 of this policy.
- 3.3 The College will deal with anonymous complaints on a case by case basis and will always take appropriate action for improvement.
- 3.4 From time to time, we receive complaints that are vexatious in nature. A vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted. In these cases, we reserve the right to decide not to pursue complaints of this kind and will inform the complainant in writing of our decision. In the case of vexatious complaints made by learners, we reserve the right to pursue this through the Learner Disciplinary Policy.

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4. Objectives

4.1 We provide:

- 4.1.1 A fair and transparent process to complainants.
- 4.1.2 A procedure which resolves concerns as swiftly as possible.
- 4.1.3 A thorough investigation into complaints received
- 4.1.4 Improvements to our services.
- 4.1.5 Accurate recording, monitoring and reporting of complaints.
- 4.1.6 Using feedback received to inform and improve standards of its provision and service.
- 4.1.7 A process to record positive feedback for quality improvement purposes to disseminate good practice across the College.

5. When does this policy apply?

- 5.1 You can use this policy if you have already approached us about a concern but you are unhappy with the response that we have provided.
- 5.2 You can use this policy if your concern is of a serious nature for example, complaints involving safeguarding matters, disclosure of matters of public interest, inappropriate conduct of a College employee or College learner, a claim of bullying or discrimination, an allegation of fraud, or a serious service failure. This list is not exhaustive and you can complain directly to the Designated Complaints Officer who will immediately refer the complaint to the appropriate Designated Senior Person for investigation under the appropriate policy. This clause applies even if the complaint is anonymous, or the complainant withdraws the complaint.
- 5.3 Following initial investigation, complaints regarding the conduct of a College employee will be dealt with in accordance with the College's human resources procedures, as outlined in Section 11, if appropriate. The complainant will be informed that the matter has been progressed but not the nature of the progression.
- 5.4 It can be the case that concerns raised are outside of the College's control, such as in relation to legislation or Welsh Government policy decisions. If this is the case, then we will advise you about how to make your concerns known to the most appropriate organisation.
- 5.5 If the matter is in relation to another College policy the Designated Complaints Officer will work with the relevant responsible person to take it forward, examples are: **Safeguarding, Academic Appeals, Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Welsh Language Standards, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity.** This clause applies even if the complaint is anonymous, or the complainant withdraws the complaint.

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6. When does this policy not apply?

- 6.1 If it is the first time that you are raising a concern with us, then this policy does not apply unless it is of a serious nature (see 5.2). You will need to raise it with the Faculty/Department in the first instance, so they can try to solve the concern for you. If you are unsure who to contact, then the Designated Complaints Officer will advise you.

7. What can you complain about?

- 7.1 We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- 7.1.1 The standards of one of our services.
- 7.1.2 The action, or lack of action, by the College or one of our employees
- 7.1.3 Any processes or provisions of the College which affect learners or customers.

- 7.2 We do not treat any of the following as a complaint:

- 7.2.1 A first request for service or the reporting of a concern. You must give the relevant Department/Faculty the chance to resolve your concern in the first instance, unless your complaint is of a serious nature, see 5.2.
- 7.2.2 A request for information or an explanation of a policy or practice.
- 7.2.3 Where a final decision has been reached in accordance with another College policy, dissatisfaction with that outcome cannot be submitted as a complaint.
- 7.2.4 A claim for compensation from the College.
- 7.2.5 Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal.
- 7.2.6 Issues that are over six months old and there is no reasonable reason submitted for the delay in raising the complaint.
- 7.2.7 An attempt to reopen or reconsider a complaint that has been concluded, without additional evidence.

- 7.3 Any concerns/complaints received relating to staff will be considered under the appropriate policy, dependent upon the nature of the concern/complaint, its situation, contextual information and presentation. Be it, under the complaints policy, low level concerns policy, safeguarding policy or staff disciplinary policy as deemed appropriate by the initial complaints panel.

- 7.4 Pembrokeshire College is a bilingual institution and supports the right of its learners, staff and the public to use Welsh in their dealings with the College. It is committed to fully comply with the Welsh Language Standards and to dealing effectively with any

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complaints about its failure to meet the Standards, or any other complaint concerning the Welsh language within the College.

Complaints about the College's compliance with its Welsh Language Standards can also be made to the Welsh Language Commissioner. There is a complaint form available on the Welsh Language Commissioner's [website](#).

8. Who can complain?

- 8.1 You can complain if you are a learner, commercial customer, parent/guardian or employer who has accessed our services.
- 8.2 For concerns in relation to your employment, you must raise any concerns with your line manager in the first instance in accordance with the College's Grievance Policy.
- 8.3 You can complain as a learner group, and if this is the case we will communicate with all of you as part of this process. We may ask you to nominate a group representative for ease of communication.
- 8.4 You can complain on an individual's behalf where they are:
 - 8.4.1 Under 18 and/or
 - 8.4.2 Unable to do so themselves (where it can be evidenced that they lack capacity to do so).

It is the College's process that any learner concerned will be spoken to unless there are exceptional circumstances where this is not possible.

9. How long have you got to make a complaint?

- 9.1 Complaints must be submitted no later than six months after the date of the incident occurring. However, older incidents or concerns referred to within the complaint, and that directly relate to the matter complained of, may be investigated as part of the overall complaint.

The College may decide to consider a complaint received outside of the timescale where there is a valid reason why the complainant did not raise the issue sooner, or where a complaint has been made to a member of College staff who did not then identify it and treat it as a complaint.

10. How do you make a complaint?

- 10.1 You can contact us in several ways.

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Email:

complaints@pembrokeshire.ac.uk

Telephone:

Contact the Designated Complaints Officer on 01437 753 138

Write to:

Designated Complaints Officer
Pembrokeshire College
Merlins Bridge
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1SZ

11. What is our concern/complaints procedure?

11.1 Insert Section 12 text.

Stage	Steps
Stage One Concerns	1. You can discuss your concern with any member of staff as long as they are not the subject of the concern, the Department Manager, or the Designated Complaints Officer (DCO). 2. Our aim is to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and no more than 10 working days after you have raised a concern (via this policy). 3. If the process will take more than 10 working days then you will be notified in writing of the reason and the new deadline. 4. The department manager who deals with the concern will provide the DCO with written details of how they have dealt with it and how you have been informed so they can be recorded. 5. If, following stage one, you are dissatisfied with the outcome you must notify the DCO in writing of your reasons for requesting the concern be progressed to stage two (i.e. as a formal complaint) within 10 working days.
Stage two Investigation Process	1. Once we receive your formal complaint we will acknowledge it in writing within five working days. 2. In this acknowledgement we will set out our understanding of the complaint and our understanding of the outcome that you are seeking. At this point it is your responsibility to inform us if any of our details are incorrect. 3. We will pass the complaint over to the Head of Faculty/Department, and also to the Human Resources department to be dealt with through

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	human resources policies if the complaint is in relation to a staff member, to review and submit a summary report within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If it is not possible for the report to be completed within 20 working days you will be informed in writing of the reasons and the new deadline. 4. The Head of Faculty/Department will use evidence from various sources including e-mails, letters, talking with staff involved, reviewing records on College systems and reviewing College policies and procedures and/or relevant external policies. They may also contact you directly by telephone or email or request a face to face meeting to discuss your complaint. 5. On completion of the investigation, the Head of Faculty/Department will provide the DCO with a written summary of the investigation and their findings; the DCO will notify you in writing of the outcome (and any actions for improvement identified) within 10 working days. 6. This written notification will also inform you of your right of appeal (see 12 below).
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*Concerns and complaints received outside of College term-time may go over the working days outlined above due to staff availability.

12. What happens after the outcome of the complaint?

- 12.1 If the complaints investigation has identified any actions for improvement, the relevant Head of Faculty/Department Manager is responsible for implementing them within an acceptable timeframe. The DCO will monitor the progress of these actions.

13. What if you are not happy with the outcome? (Your right of appeal)

- 13.1 If, after receipt of the written outcome of the investigation into your complaint, you are dissatisfied with the decision reached, you have the right to appeal.
- 13.2 Any complaints appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the findings from the DCO.
- 13.3 Appeals will only be accepted if:
- 13.3.1 you have submitted additional evidence, which was not available at the time of submission of your complaint
 - 13.3.2 you are claiming (and submitting evidence or detailed reasons) that the investigation was not conducted/concluded fairly
 - 13.3.3 you are claiming that the complaint was not handled in accordance with this policy.

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- 13.4 Appeals must be submitted in writing setting out in detail the grounds for appeal and sent to:

Email:

executiveoffice@pembrokeshire.ac.uk

Write to:

Director of Learner Journey
Pembrokeshire College
Merlins Bridge
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1SZ

- 13.5 In the event that the Director of Learner Journey is the subject of the complaint or has been involved in the attempted resolution of the complaint, the appeal will be heard by an alternative senior post holder.
- 13.6 The written notification of the appeal outcome will be provided within 30 working days of receipt of the appeal.

14. Office of Independent Adjudication

- 14.1 For learners enrolled on further education and higher education programmes, the College is a member of and complies with the requirements of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Learners who have exhausted the College's internal complaints procedures will be provided with information on how to seek an independent review through the OIA where eligible. Please visit their website. (www.oiahe.org.uk)

15. What happens to your information?

- 15.1 We will keep your records in line with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- 15.2 You can ask to access your complaint record by contacting the DPO – Data Protection Officer.
- 15.3 Data Protection Complaints – Complaints relating to the processing of personal data, information rights or alleged breaches of the UK GDPR or the Data Protection Act 2018 fall outside the scope of this Complaints Procedure. In accordance with section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals have the right to raise such concerns directly

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with the College as data controller. These matters will be handled under the College's Data Protection Policy and associated procedures. Details of how to raise a data protection complaint are set out in the Data Protection Policy.

16. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about: The standards of one of our services The action, or lack of action, by the College or one of our employees Any processes or provisions of the College which affect learners or customers
Compliment	An expression of satisfaction about: The standards of one of our services The actions by the College or one of our employees Any processes or provisions of the College which affect learners or customers
Working days	College business days which do not include bank holidays or weekends. Concerns or complaints received outside of College term-time may go over the working days outlined in the policy due to staff availability.

17. The Welsh Language / Yr Iaith Gymraeg

The Corporation has a duty to comply with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations under section 150 (2) of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. It will therefore ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language when offering and providing services to students, staff and the wider community and that they can use the Welsh language in accordance with the Standards.

Mae gan y Gorfforaeth ddyletswydd i gydymffurfio â Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg o dan adran 150 (2) o Fesur yr Iaith Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011. Felly, bydd yn sicrhau na chaiff y Gymraeg ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg wrth gynnig a darparu gwasanaethau i fyfyrwyr, staff a'r gymuned ehangach a'u bod yn medru defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn unol â'r Safonau.

The College is committed to the promotion of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh language, Equality and Diversity, Essential Skills, Health, Safety, Safeguarding, Wellbeing and the Environment.

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Mae'r Coleg wedi ymrwymo i hyrwyddo Addysg ar gyfer Datblygiad Cynaliadwy a Dinasyddiaeth Fyd-eang (ADCDF), yr iaith Gymraeg, Cydraddoldeb ac Amrywiaeth, Sgiliau Hanfodol, Iechyd, Diogelwch, Diogelu, Lles a'r Amgylchedd.

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Integrated Impact Assessment

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) should be completed in line with the IIA Guidance.

Section 1: Details

Name of the Initiative <i>(this could be strategy / policy / project / procedure / strategic decision)</i>	Complaints Policy
Strategic Decision	Yes
Department	Quality
Author	Tracy Chandra
Those affected? Please state e.g. learners, staff, parents/carers, wider community etc:	Learners, staff, parents and wider community
Internal administrative process	Yes
Is it a new Strategy/Policy/Procedure?	No

Section 2: Protected Characteristics

What impact will the implementation of the initiative have on people who have one or more characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010?

Please ensure that you have considered that anyone affected by the initiative can fully understand the impact, application and the consequences on them if the initiative is implemented e.g., those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are under 18, those who have English as a second language, etc.

Protected Characteristics	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact	Explanation / Evidence / Data How it might impact?
	Please tick as appropriate			

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Age	Yes			Consistent application of this Policy and active encouragement of individuals to bring forward any concerns (which are then dealt with appropriately and on a timely basis) will ensure that no individual with a protected characteristic receives less favourable treatment linked to complaints
Disability	Yes			As above
Gender Reassignment	Yes			As above
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Yes			As above
Pregnancy or Maternity	Yes			As above
Race	Yes			As above
Religion or Belief	Yes			As above
Sex	Yes			As above
Sexual orientation	Yes			As above

Section 3: Welsh Language

Welsh Language Does the initiative impact on:	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact	Explanation / Evidence / Data How it might impact?
	Please tick as appropriate			
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language	Yes			Consistent application of this Policy and the ability to offer the policy and communication through the medium of Welsh
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English	Yes			As above

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Section 4: Socio Economic Duty

Socio Economic Duty:	Positive / Advantage	Neutral or N/A	Negative / Disadvantage	Details of the impact / advantage / disadvantage
	Please tick as appropriate			
Impact on reducing Socio-economic disadvantage?	Yes			Consistent application of this Policy will ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment linked to complaints due to social economic disadvantage

Section 5: Biodiversity and Carbon Net Zero

Biodiversity / Carbon Net Zero – Does the initiative impact on:	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact	Explanation / Evidence / Data How it might impact?
	Please tick as appropriate			
Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity		No		
Promoting resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		No		
Supporting the College's commitment to Carbon Net Zero	Yes			Digital recording and communication

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Section 6: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement and consultation will you undertake?

Engagement and Consultation	Yes / No	Outcome	Date Completed
SMT	Yes		
LJCC	Yes		
Cross College FMT			
Health and Safety Committee			
Environment Committee			
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee			
Digital Accessibility Group			
Safeguarding Panel			
Staff Forum	Yes		
Wider Staff			
Departmental			
Learner Executive			
Welsh Language Steering Group			
Wider Learner Groups			
Wider Community			
Other (<i>please state</i>)			

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Section 7: Digital Accessibility

Please ensure you have considered digital accessibility of your document. The policy template is generally compliant with digital accessibility requirements, however if you change the formatting or add tables or pictures to the document, please ensure you have considered digital accessibility and further information is included in the guidance.

Section 8: Actions

As a result of completing the IIA, consider any actions which need to be taken to remove or reduce any negative impact, or to improve any positive impacts?

Impact	Actions to Improve Positive Impact or Mitigating Negative Actions

Section 9: Monitoring and Review

How will the initiative and any impacts be monitored and reviewed, please make specific reference to any actions outlined above:

Monitor / Review	Timeline

Signed (Author): Tracy Chandra **Title:** WBL Contracts & Compliance Manager **Date:** 21/09/2026