

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

The College of Animal Welfare is committed to maintaining a strong client focus, continuously improving standards, and recognising individual contributions to the College's success. This policy outlines the procedures for handling complaints to ensure they are resolved promptly and effectively.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and structured process for clients (learners, employers, and the public) to raise concerns or complaints about any aspect of their dealings with the College. The aim is to resolve issues quickly and prevent escalation.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all clients of the College of Animal Welfare, including learners, employers, and members of the public. It covers both academic and non-academic matters.

4. Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about the College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided.
- **Complainant:** The person making the complaint.
- **Informal Complaint:** A complaint that is resolved through informal mediation without the need for a formal investigation.
- **Formal Complaint:** A complaint that requires a formal investigation and written response.

5. Policy Statement

The College is committed to:

- Encouraging informal mediation.
- Ensuring fairness and efficiency in handling complaints.
- Facilitating early resolution.
- Treating complaints with seriousness, sympathy, and confidentiality.
- Learning from complaints to improve services.

6. Informal Complaints Procedure

- **Step 1:** Address the concern to the member of staff directly involved or the Programme Manager/HoVS.
- **Step 2:** If unresolved, raise the concern as a formal complaint via the website, VLE, or email (complaints@caw.ac.uk).
- **Acknowledgment:** Informal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- **Response:** A response will be provided within 5 working days, or a holding letter if further investigation is required.

7. Formal Complaints Procedure

- **Step 1:** Submit a formal complaint via email (complaints@caw.ac.uk) or through the VLE/website.
- **Acknowledgment:** The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- **Investigation:** The complaint will be investigated by the complaints team, and findings will be submitted in a written report.
- **Further Information:** Additional information may be requested from the complainant. Failure to provide requested information within 21 days will result in the matter being closed.
- **Outcome:** An outcome will be provided within 21 working days. If a full response cannot be given, progress will be communicated.
- **Resolution:** If the complainant is satisfied, the matter will be considered closed.

8. Appeals

- **Step 1:** If dissatisfied with the outcome, submit an appeal in writing to the Vice Principal Quality within 7 days.
- **Investigation:** The Vice Principal Quality will investigate the appeal, focusing on procedural correctness and reasonableness of the outcome.
- **Decision:** The decision will be confirmed in writing within 21 working days. If a full response cannot be provided, progress will be communicated.
- **External Review:** If dissatisfied with the appeal outcome, the complainant can refer the matter to the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA) or the Department for Education.

9. Training

All staff will receive training on complaint management. Staff will receive training on handling complaints effectively, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address complaints promptly and professionally. To ensure the complaints process is culturally sensitive and inclusive. The College will provide support for complainants, including counselling services if needed, to ensure that all individuals feel respected and understood throughout the complaint process.

10. Monitoring and Review

- All complaints will be used as a feedback mechanism to improve services. The College will regularly analyse complaint data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- **Log Maintenance:** A log of complaints, including outcomes, will be maintained and reviewed termly by senior management.
- **Policy Review:** The policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently to reflect changing needs and legislative changes.

11. Contact Details

- **Formal Complaints:** Barbara Cooper (complaints@caw.ac.uk)
- **Appeals:** Vice Principal Quality, Karen Davidson (kdavidson@caw.ac.uk)
- **Vice Principal Student Services:** Ruth Franklin (rfranklin@caw.ac.uk)

Policy Review Date: March 2026