



## Feedback and Complaints Policy 2018-19

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SLT responsibility:	Director of Quality		
Implementation date:	01/02/2019	Review date:	01/09/2019
Approved by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>College Leadership Team</li> </ul>	Approval date:	01/09/2018
Related documents:			
Distribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally - Can be viewed/downloaded from RNN Group and college websites</li> <li>Standard printed copies available on request via college receptions and Student Services</li> <li>Internally – Can be viewed/downloaded from staff portal</li> </ul>		
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>			
Phase 1 Initial screening (date):		<input type="checkbox"/> Requires full impact assessment (Please tick if appropriate)	
Phase 2 Full impact assessment (date):			
<b>SECTION</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	
1	Introduction	2	
2	Scope	2	
3	Key Responsibilities	3	
4	Principles	3	
5	Informal Complaints Handling	4	
6	Formal Complaints Handling	4	
7	Appeals	5	
8	Monitoring and Reporting	5	
Annex 1	Feedback Process Flowchart	6	
Annex 2	Complaints Process Flowchart	7	

Reference Q102 Version 1 Reviewed 22/01/2019	Feedback and Complaints Policy <a href="http://www.rnngroup.co.uk/about/group-policies/">www.rnngroup.co.uk/about/group-policies/</a>	Owner: Head of Quality Page 1 of 7
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. RNN Group (comprising the colleges of Rotherham, North Nottinghamshire, Dearne Valley, RNN Training and subsidiary companies) is committed to providing high quality services and learning experiences to all those it serves and welcomes all feedback about the services provided.
- 1.2. This policy reflects sector best practice and underpins RNN Group Vision and Core Values whereby the experience and satisfaction of learners and stakeholders is at the heart of the service offer.
- 1.3. This policy complies with Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements for the handling of complaints and arrangement of appeals within Further Education and Apprenticeships. In circumstances where the RNN Group Feedback and Complaints procedure has been exhausted, appeals can be made directly to the Education and Skills Funding Agency or respective awarding organisation. Further information regarding the contact details of these organisations can be found on their independent websites or requested from the Quality Improvement Team.
- 1.4. For Higher Education complaints, this policy reflects best practice as outlined by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). In circumstances where the RNN Group Feedback and Complaints procedure has been exhausted, appeals can be made directly to the QAA, with reference to *Chapter B9: Academic appeals and student complaints* of the Quality Code. Further information regarding the contact details of the QAA or Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) organisations can be found on their independent websites or via the Director of Higher Education.
- 1.5. For consumer credit complaints, this policy is informed by the Financial Ombudsman Service guidance on complaints handling and referrals may be made to the service for any complaints which cannot be settled by the RNN Group.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1. Feedback and complaints may be submitted by learners, parents/carers/guardians of learners under the age of 18 (or up to the age of 25 for learners with Education, Health and Care Plans), employers, customers, other stakeholders or members of the public.
- 2.2. Complaints may not be made by representatives or a third party. Learner groups are entitled to submit 'collective complaints' and where this is the case, the RNN Group may ask learners to nominate a group representative.
- 2.3. The objectives of this policy are to:
  - Provide a transparent procedure which clearly outlines how feedback and complaints will be handled within the RNN Group
  - Ensure all complaints are handled sensitively, fairly and with respect for privacy (where requested)
  - Resolve problems and concerns quickly and successfully
  - Improve the services of RNN Group by acting promptly to action any recommendations provided following the investigation of complaints
- 2.4. Training and development for staff who frequently handle feedback and complaints within the RNN Group, will be arranged by the Quality Improvement Team.
- 2.5. Concerns of a serious nature may include, but not be limited to the following:
  - Health & Safety and Safeguarding issues
  - Equality & Diversity Issues
  - Breach of confidentiality
  - Theft or damage to personal property
  - Consumer credit disputes
  - Staff conduct
- 2.6. Anonymous valid complaints are investigated and findings recorded.

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### 3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Director of Quality is the senior leadership team member with overall responsibility for complaints and reports to the senior leadership team and governors.
- The Head of Quality: Study Programmes oversees the operational aspects, provides reports to the Director of Quality, supports the Quality Co-ordinator with complaints management and supports managers with guidance on investigations and responses.
- The Quality Co-ordinator manages the central Complaints tracker, receives, logs and forwards complaints to an Investigating Officer (who is usually a manager), supports with investigations, responses and data analysis.
- The Investigating Officer's role is to establish the essential facts of the matter by collating any evidence that supports or contradicts the allegation. The Investigation Officer completes an Investigation Report and drafts a letter of response and emails these to [complaints@rnngroup.co.uk](mailto:complaints@rnngroup.co.uk) for standardisation and issue by the Quality Co-ordinator.
- Human Resources (a Senior Partner) is consulted for any staff conduct issue and assigns a designated member of Human Resources to support the Investigating Officer.
- A Health & Safety Officer may be involved in any complaint where there is a health and safety concern.
- A Safeguarding Officer will be involved if a Safeguarding concern is raised.
- The Director of Higher Education will receive, manage and respond to any HE complaints.
- A senior leadership team member will chair an Appeals Board consisting of an independent manager and a scribe.

### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 This policy is designed to support and improve the RNN Group offer. The RNN Group values feedback, both good and bad, and sees this as vital to understanding the necessary information required to improve its services and celebrate successes.
- 4.2 Feedback is defined as any comment provided about the service or experience of learners, employers, parents/carers/guardians or other stakeholders of the RNN Group, which is used as a basis for recognising good practice or making improvements. Feedback can be provided verbally to any member of staff or formally, in writing to the Quality Improvement Team by emailing: [qualityimprovement@rotherham.ac.uk](mailto:qualityimprovement@rotherham.ac.uk)

On receipt of feedback we will:

- Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback
- Pass on any compliments to individual staff members and their manager and ensure the good work of staff is recognised
- Share best practice to continue to improve services across the Group
- Investigate any suggestions as to how improvements can be made and where possible and appropriate, act quickly to implement these

- 4.3 A complaint is defined as a statement that services of the RNN Group are unsatisfactory or that action, or lack of action, taken by the RNN Group is unacceptable.

On receipt of a complaint we will:

- Endeavour to listen carefully to any and all concerns raised within a reasonable amount of time
- Respect privacy if requested
- Operate fairly and sensitively
- Maintain accurate and detailed records and keep all parties updated as to the progress of the matter being dealt with
- Take action where appropriate
- Ensure no learner or staff member is disadvantaged or discriminated against having made a complaint

- 4.4 Complaints may be submitted to the RNN Group in person or over the telephone (a written statement will be taken by a member of staff), in writing to the Quality Improvement Team or via email to [complaints@rnngroup.co.uk](mailto:complaints@rnngroup.co.uk). Complaints addressed to the Principal or other

Reference Q102 Version 1 Reviewed 22/01/2019	Feedback and Complaints Policy <a href="http://www.rnngroup.co.uk/about/group-policies/">www.rnngroup.co.uk/about/group-policies/</a>	Owner: Head of Quality Page 3 of 7
--	--	---------------------------------------

staff will be forwarded to the Quality Improvement Group for processing. Complaint forms can be downloaded from any RNN college or RNN Group website or collected from Student Services or from any college reception. Complaint forms can be provided in alternative formats upon request – please contact the Quality Improvement team or speak to a member of staff, outlining your requirements.

- 4.5 This policy covers all learners for a period of up to 3 calendar months from the last day of required attendance or from being informed of the qualification received. The RNN Group will take reasonable steps to resolve all concerns as quickly as possible.

## 5. INFORMAL COMPLAINT HANDLING

- 5.1 In the first instance, the RNN Group will endeavour to resolve complaints informally with the objective of achieving an early and satisfactory resolution. Where this is not possible due to an early resolution not being achieved, where the complainant refuses to engage with the informal handling of the complaint, or where the seriousness or complexity of the complaint deems it most appropriate to be dealt with formally, the complainant will be informed of this and advised of the formal complaints handling procedure.
- 5.2 When raising a concern, the RNN Group asks that you are prepared to:
- Inform us as quickly as possible of any requirements you may have to help you in raising a concern
  - Describe reasonably and fairly the details of the issue or concern you have
  - Explain any actions you have taken to deal with this
  - Allow us reasonable time to investigate the issue and follow the procedure outlined in this policy
  - Understand that some things are outside of the control of the RNN Group
- 5.3 When handling informal complaints, the RNN Group will:
- Ask you to speak directly to the member of staff involved (this may include Tutors, Assessors, Team Leaders or Managers) within 20 days of the concern arising.
  - Where it is not possible to speak to the person directly involved, you should contact any member of staff or the Students Union (see Student Services for more information about the Student Union)
  - If the concern is regarding college services, you should request contact details of the relevant Head of Department from reception or Student Services
  - If you are unsure of who to contact, please contact the Quality Improvement Team who can advise you of the best route to progress your concern or complaint
  - Staff will aim to resolve your issue within 10 working days or update you on progress

## 6. FORMAL COMPLAINTS HANDLING

- 6.1 Where concerns have not been successfully resolved in the informal stage, or where it is deemed appropriate for them to immediately enter the formal stage. Formal complaints developing from the informal stage must be made within 20 working days of the informal stage being exhausted. The RNN Group will:
- Acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days and provide a copy of the complaints policy and/or form if requested.
  - Ask you to outline in full, all details of your concern or complaint, any action you have taken thus far to deal with it and what your preferred outcome to the complaint is
  - Ask that you give us permission to investigate the issue, including providing any evidence required and allow us to collect statements from all parties involved (where necessary)
  - Inform you of the investigation start date
  - Provide a written outcome letter, within 10 working days of the start date, and inform you of the appeals' process, including contact details for relevant funding organisations, awarding organisations and Ofsted, should you be unsatisfied with the outcome
- 6.2 To ensure fairness and objectivity, an independent investigating officer will be assigned to conduct the investigation and collate all the evidence which may include witness testimony, reports and documents and physical evidence. The Investigating Officer completes an Investigation Report and drafts the investigation outcome response which will include all the

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findings. The response will be issued to the complainant within 10 working days of the investigation start date. Complaints' records will be retained by the Quality Improvement Team for up to 6 years.

## 7. APPEALS

- 7.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, then they have the right to make an appeal (within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint outcome response) in the following circumstances:
- There is evidence that the Feedback & Complaints Policy was not followed
  - There is evidence that the facts stated were not investigated
  - The findings are inconsistent with the outcome
- 7.2 When making an appeal, the complainant should notify the Quality Improvement Team of their intention to appeal ([complaints@rnnngroup.co.uk](mailto:complaints@rnnngroup.co.uk)). The RNN Group will acknowledge the appeal within 3 working days and ask that complainant provide the reasons they are unhappy with the outcome provided, the grounds for their appeal and what they feel the preferred outcome should be.
- 7.3 On receipt of an appeal, the RNN Group Complaints' Appeal Board will review any evidence provided by the complainant and the Investigating Officer, including the investigation notes. The RNN Group Appeals Board will consist of a minimum of 2 staff comprised of:
- One member of SLT
  - One independent manager
  - A scribe
- The complainant will be informed of the date and time of the Appeals board should they wish to attend.
- 7.4 Based on the findings of the Appeals Board, the appeal will either be upheld or dismissed. An appeal outcome response will be issued to the complainant outlining the findings of the Appeals board and the reasons for their decision. The appeals response is final and concludes the RNN Group complaints procedure.
- 7.5 In the event of an unsatisfactory resolution following a full internal investigation, the complainant can refer the matter to the appropriate external body (dependent upon meeting certain criteria – please check their website) within 3 months (or otherwise stated below) of the appeals response date.

**For Further Education provision including apprenticeships:** [The Complaints Team, Education & Skills Funding Agency](#), Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT

**For Higher Education provision** validated by the [University of Hull](#) (within 21 working days):

**For any other Higher Education matters** (not related to the University of Hull): [The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIAHE)

**For Consumer Credit disputes:** [Financial Ombudsman](#)

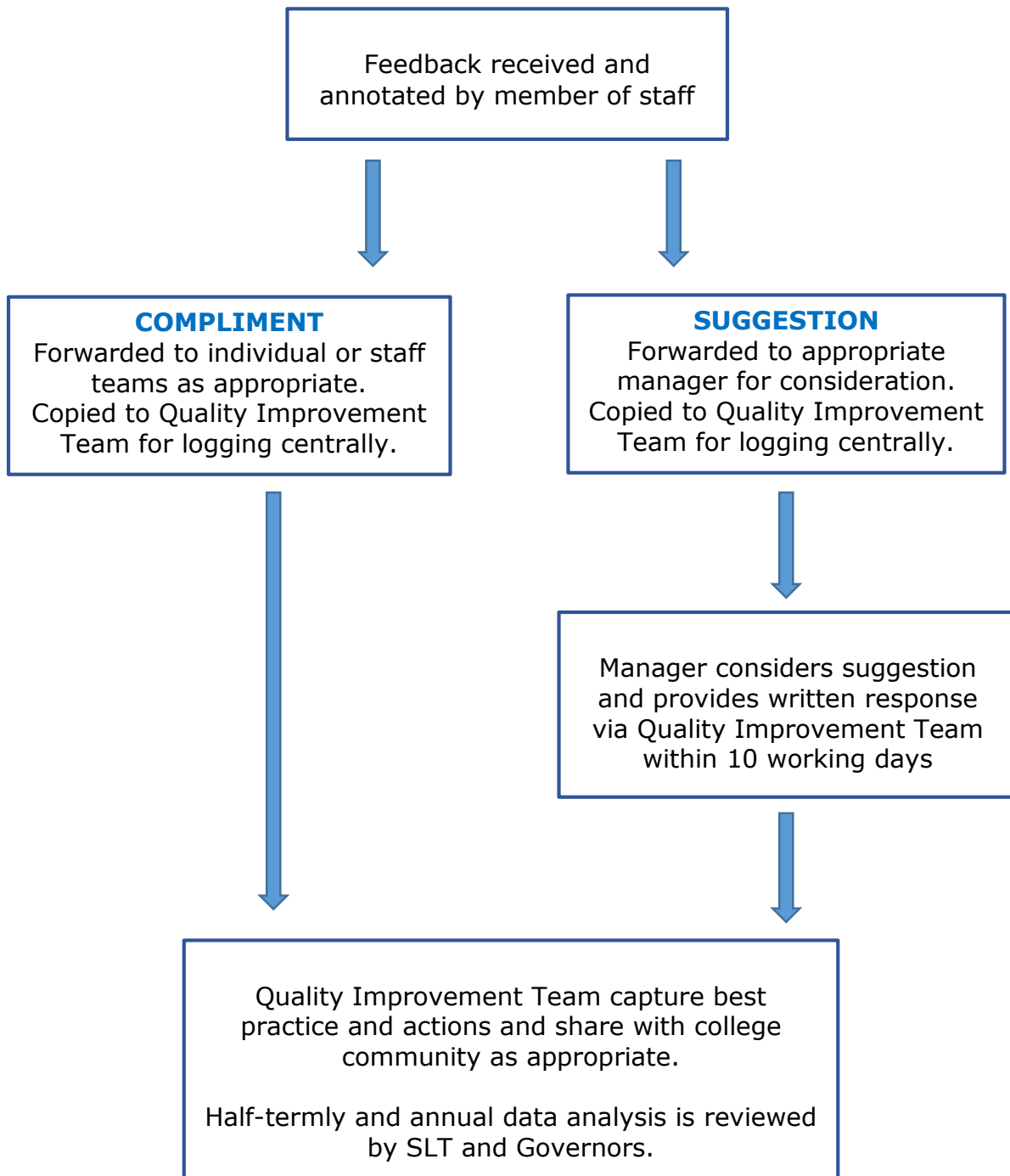
**For Freedom of Information requests:** The [Information Commissioner](#)

## 8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 8.1 All FE feedback and complaints received by the RNN Group are centrally logged, monitored and reviewed by the Quality Improvement Team to identify any themes. Monthly data reports outlining the number and primary category of complaints are reported to the Senior Leadership team and Board of Governors via the Director of Quality. Annual monitoring and evaluation reports of all feedback and complaints received by the RNN Group are provided to the College Management Team, Strategic Quality Group and Board of Governors.

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## Annex 1 Feedback Process



## Annex 2 Further Education Complaints' Process

An informal concern is raised with a relevant member of staff or manager, aiming to resolve the matter as early as possible. If not resolved informally, it may escalate to the formal process

HE complaints are managed/recorded by the Director of Higher Education

### FORMAL COMPLAINT

Referred to Quality Improvement Team (via complaints inbox) for processing:

- logged on central tracker
- acknowledgement issued within 2 working days of receipt
- Independent Investigating Officer appointed and notified
- HR notified of staff conduct complaints

### INVESTIGATION

Completed by Investigating Officer within 10 working days (where possible) and an Investigation Report completed

### RESPONSE

- Investigating Officer emails draft response letter & Investigation Report to complaints inbox for standardisation
- Quality Co-ordinator (QC) standardises & issues response

Central complaints tracker updated

Appeals Board will be an independent SLT member and a manager

### INTERNAL APPEAL

- Received and acknowledged by QC within 2 working days.
- Appeals Board agreed and provided with complaint and investigation evidence.
- QC notifies complainant of Appeals Board meeting time/date and invites to attend

### APPEAL RESPONSE

QC issues formal response within 10 working days of appeal date (including right to appeal to relevant external organisation within 3 months)

### EXTERNAL APPEAL

Following conclusion of internal appeal, and within 3 months of receipt of appeal decision, complainant may contact relevant external organisation