

## **1 About the Complaints Policy**

- 1.1 This policy applies to members of the public, service providers, services users and stakeholders (this list is not exhaustive). It does not apply to employees.
- 1.2 The Company Secretary is responsible for this policy. Please contact the Company Secretary in the first instance for further information.

## **2 Policy Statement**

- 2.1 The organisation subscribes to the following codes:

- the Seven Principles of Public Life
- the Proper Conduct of Public Life
- the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

It is the organisation's policy to deal with any complaints about members of staff, the services provided or administration of the organisation quickly and efficiently avoiding the need for written complaints wherever possible. However, should the matter necessitate a written complaint the procedures detailed below should be followed.

Should a complaint relate to or implicate the Company Secretary or the Chief Executive then the organisation maintains the right to ask members of the HR Committee or the Audit Committee to consider the matter before it reaches procedural stage three.

## **3 Complaints Procedure**

### **3.1 Stage 1 – Company Secretary**

The complainant should fill out a complaints form (copy attached) identifying both the nature of the complaint and, if appropriate, the individual against whom the complaint is being made. This should be addressed to the Company Secretary in the first instance.

*Note: Should the complaint relate to or implicate the Company Secretary, then the Chief Executive should be contacted.*

The complaint will be formally acknowledged within five working days of receipt. The Company Secretary will be responsible for logging all complaints and providing responses to the complainant.

In cases where the complaint is against the organisation or administration of the organisation the Company Secretary will copy the complaint to the Chief Executive who will undertake to review the circumstances of the complaint with the Company Secretary and make a decision on the course of action to be taken.

In cases where the complaint is against a particular individual, the Company Secretary will forward the complaint to the individual's Manager to review and progress. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the Company Secretary who will then respond to the complainant.

In either instance, the organisation may seek further information from the complainant

regarding the circumstances of the incident.

A decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receiving the letter. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming – usually within a further 15 working days.

### **3.2** Stage 2 – Chief Executive

If the complainant is satisfied with the explanation or proposed action, the matter will be considered to have been closed. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the explanation or course of action then the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive.

*Note: should the complaint relate to or implicate the Chief Executive, then either the Chair of the HR Committee or the Audit Committee should be contacted.*

The Chief Executive will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision that may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may require that further or different action be taken.

The outcome of the decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the complainant's communication. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming – usually within a further 15 working days.

### **3.3** Stage 3 – Chair of the Board

If the complainant is satisfied with the explanation or proposed action, the matter will be considered to have been closed. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the explanation or course of action then the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Chair will consider all the facts of the matter and will come to a decision that may confirm that the action proposed is adequate or may require that further or different action be taken.

The outcome of the decision will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of receipt of the complainant's communication. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and indicating when a response is likely to be forthcoming – usually within a further 15 working days.

### **3.5** Stage 4 – Scottish Ombudsman

If the complainant is satisfied with the explanation or proposed action, the matter will be considered to have been closed. In the event that the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will have the right to complain to the Scottish Ombudsman under the terms of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 within a year of the incident to which the complaint refers.

The Scottish Ombudsman can be contacted on 0800 377 7330. Further information can be gained on the Scottish Ombudsman's website – <http://www.spsso.org.uk>.



## Complaint Form

Please complete the form below if you wish to make a formal, written complaint in respect of:

- Member/s of staff
- Provision of service
- Administration of the organisation

Completed forms should be returned to:

Gayle Watson  
Company Secretary  
Colleges Scotland  
Argyll Court  
Castle Business Park  
Stirling, FK9 4TY

### Complainant's Details

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone number/s</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Date complaint was raised</b>	

### Complaint

If the complaint is in regard to an individual, please complete the following table:

<b>Name of individual</b>	
<b>Job title</b>	

<b>Details of Complaint – please provide details of individuals involved, dates, times, etc.</b>

Please attach accompanying sheet if further space is required.

I wish this to be treated as my formal complaint against the organisation.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**Note:** *In accordance with the complaints procedures, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within five working days. The organisation's response regarding the complaint will be communicated within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. Where a full response within 15 working days is not possible, a letter will be sent to you outlining progress in dealing with the complaint and a statement indicating when a response is likely to be available – usually within a further 15 working days.*

**Organisation's Administration (to be used by the Company Secretary)**

Received by the organisation:

Signature: .....

Date: .....