FE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY 2025/27

APPROVED BY SELT ON 25 September 2025

Applies to:	
Harrogate College	X
Keighley College	X
Leeds City College	X
Leeds Conservatoire	
Leeds Sixth Form College / Pudsey Sixth Form College	X
Luminate Group Services	X
University Centre	

CHANGE CONTROL

<table>
<tr><td>Version:</td><td colspan="2">9</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Approval route</td></tr>
<tr><td>Approval committee (ELT, SELT, Board)</td><td>Date approved</td><td>Version</td></tr>
<tr><td>SELT</td><td>23/11/23</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>SELT</td><td>26/9/24</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>SELT</td><td>25 September 2025</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of author:</td><td colspan="2">Kirsty Lister</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of responsible committee:</td><td colspan="2">Quality</td></tr>
<tr><td>Related policies: (list)</td><td colspan="2">● Compliments & Complaints Procedure
● Grievance policy and procedure
● Positive Behaviour Policy
● Health and Safety policy
● Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy
● Policy against Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation
● Safeguarding & Prevent policy
● Fee Refund and Recovery policy
● Whistleblowing policy
● GDPR/Data Protection
● Freedom of Information
● Subject Access Requests</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Equality impact assessment completed</td><td>Date:</td><td>September 25</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Assessment type

X Full

☐ Part

☐ Not required</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Environmental Impact Assessment Completed</td><td>Date:</td><td>September 25</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Yes

☐ No

☐ Not required</td></tr>
</table>

Policy will be communicated via:	Colleges and Luminate group websites. Staff shared areas and via Google docs. Available upon request to external stakeholders
Next review date:	October 2027

Contents

1.Policy Statement
2.Policy Aims
3.How to Raise a Complaint - Staged Approach
4.Compliments
5. Equal Opportunities Monitoring
6. SEND Approach
7. Abuse
8. Appendix 1 - Complaint Definitions

1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is important to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint, as taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will allow the relevant teams to take quick action so the issue doesn't continue to develop.

A concern is something that may be affecting a person's welfare or happiness (directly or indirectly) ideally addressed informally in accordance with the Colleges' complaints policy.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction from a customer that should be drawn to the Colleges leadership's attention for reasonable action, to be investigated in accordance with the Colleges formal complaints procedures once appropriate informal options have been exhausted. For more detail on complaint definitions please see Appendix 1.

Restorative Practice (RP) is a proactive process based around the power of communication. It looks at repairing harm, building resilience and connections, developing relationships and understanding the power of communication. It is an approach based on a principle of how working with each other, rather than doing things to one another, can build a stronger community and working environment.

In college, RP builds a sense of community, has a positive impact on students and staff, enhances the student experience, improves attendance and retention, and reduces exclusions. This policy and procedure actively encourages the implementation of RP at all stages.

For the purpose of this document any reference to **Colleges**, is used to describe the following institutions: Leeds City College, Leeds Sixth Form, Keighley College and Harrogate College including Apprenticeship provision for these organisations.

All students should be informed that they are entitled to support in any meetings and are encouraged to bring someone. This can take the form of a friend, Student Union officer, parent / carer or other adult such as social worker, youth worker, pastoral staff member or coaching tutor. An advocate can play a powerful role as they can diffuse difficult discussions and agree to support and mentor the student in achieving their agreed objectives.

For the purposes of this policy, an advocate refers to someone that is familiar to the learner or their circumstances but is not acting in a professional e.g. legal context.

1.1. This policy covers complaints from or on behalf of all Colleges customers about any of the Colleges products or services. It does **not** cover:

- academic appeals
- grievance and disciplinary offences
- safeguarding concerns; including those around extremism and radicalisation (prevent duty)
- complaints lodged by staff
- complaints relating to Higher Education courses
- complaints for Luminate Education Group providers, other than those listed

As these should be pursued through the relevant policies and procedures, a complaint could invoke deployment of one or more of the associated Colleges policies and procedures noted in the 'related policies' list above.

1.2. The effectiveness of the complaints policy and procedure depends on being able to collect appropriate information from the parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For this reason, we request that complaints are raised as soon as is practically possible, and in any event no later than **12 months** from the date of the incident or completion of the course, in order that we may investigate any concerns fully. Where a complaint is raised regarding issues that have been investigated previously and responded to in full, the complaint will be rejected. Complaints raised more than 12 months after the date of the incident or course completion will be rejected save where in the absolute discretion of the College there are exceptional circumstances which justify the late submission of the complaint. Where a learner has reached the end date of their study programme, and all funding obligations have been fulfilled by the college this may also result in a rejection.

1.3. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with under this policy & procedure. It is at the discretion of the Colleges leadership receiving an anonymous complaint to determine how the matter is handled.

1.4. Complaints received during college closure or holidays may result in delays to investigations however updates will be provided if applicable. As it is not always possible to maintain an investigation during periods of increased staff absences e.g. half term, summer break, it may be necessary to adjourn an investigation and any subsequent responses until all relevant staff have returned.

1.5. If complaining on behalf of a student/prospective student (that is over 16 years old) please ensure permission has been sought to share their details/experience. The student will need to provide confirmation of their approval before a response can be issued.

2. POLICY AIMS

2.1. The Colleges complaints policy is designed to encourage the fair and efficient resolution to issues at the first point of contact. Following a restorative approach to fairly address any issues raised.

2.2. This policy outlines the steps to take if you need to raise a complaint with us. All concerns or complaints will be handled by Colleges staff in an open, professional and restorative manner, on the basis that we will try to resolve any issues you have at the lowest level possible.

2.3. If you need the complaints policy in an alternative format, please contact the Quality, Teaching, Learning & Assessment team on 0113 284 6349 or via email at **quality@luminate.ac.uk.**

3. Staged Approach

The Colleges are committed to the building and maintaining of positive relationships and actively encourages all staff to engage with restorative practices when dealing with a concern or complaint.

The Colleges apply a staged approach to investigations, full details of which can be found in our Compliments & Complaints procedure.

These stages are:

- Informal
- Stage 1
- Stage 2 (immediate and escalated)
- Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the final Colleges response, they have the right to raise it with the relevant awarding organisation/validating body, or with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) within three months. But must have first exhausted all stages of the college's complaints procedure.

4.0 Compliments

As an organisation, we are focused on transforming lives by providing outstanding education, training and outcomes for our students. The aspiration is to always add value for students and society by having a positive impact, allowing all students to succeed and improve their lives.

You can submit a compliment for a member of staff, a team or a specific organisation. Compliments will be passed on to our staff, their line manager and are used to identify areas of good practice and opportunities for development.

Compliments can be submitted in writing to quality@luminate.ac.uk or via telephone on 0113 284 6349.

Compliments are used to enable service and individual developments, and employees will be recognised appropriately.

5.0 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

As an organisation, we are committed to offering an equal service to all our customers. To assist in this, the Quality team may collect information about people who feed back to us using the complaints procedure. This information includes age, gender, disability and ethnicity and will only be used for monitoring purposes. All information will be treated confidentially.

6.0 SEND Approach

Our Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) policy describes our commitments to the Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice and seeks to ensure that students are supported to succeed and recognise the value of learning as a key to sustainable employment and progress in their learning.

As Colleges, we are committed to ensuring that all students are able to raise concerns or complaints when and if they occur. Where a person finds it difficult to understand or voice their concerns, they can appoint an advocate to speak on their behalf. An Internal Advocate can be

assigned through the SEND support team. For external Advocates you should contact your local council and ask about their advocacy services.

7.0 Abuse

As Colleges, we aim to treat anyone making a complaint courteously and with respect at all times. In turn, we expect you to treat college staff in a similarly respectful way. Threatening, harassing, abusive or intimidating behaviour or language will not be tolerated and if exhibited the complainant will be determined as being vexatious. Where in the reasonable opinion of the College a complainant is determined as being vexatious, the College will warn the complainant and ask that the complainant modify their behaviour. If the behaviour continues, the College will cease to deal with the complaint and will advise the complainant accordingly.

Any complaint found to include threatening behaviours or comments following investigation may lead to the instigation of disciplinary procedures.

Quality Team
Email: quality@luminate.ac.uk
Tel: 0113 284 6349

6 -EIA FE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY 2025/27.docx

22- EnvIA FE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY 25/27 .docx

8.0 Appendix 1 - Complaint Definitions

Type	Define	Can be from
Teaching & Learning	Complaint in relation to the structure or delivery of teaching	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under
Assessment	Complaint about the delivery of assessments	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under
Accommodation & Resources	Complaint about the physical buildings or the resources provided	Student Apprentice Public
Management & Administration	Complaint about procedural conduct and policy implementation (ie. whether a department has followed procedure)	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under Public
Student Support & Services	Complaints about tutorials, ASC, LRC, Students Union or any other non-teaching service provided to a student ot application	Student Apprentice Parent/Carer of 18 or under Public
Equality & Diversity Related	Complaint about the Colleges following the law in relation to EDI	Student Apprentice / Employers Public
Local Community	Complaint from the public about any aspect of the Colleges, except disability related	Public
External Partner	Complaint relating to any external partners in which the Colleges hold a contract with. The complaint will only be dealt with if it is relating to a student and not the company in general	Student Apprentice