

## **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: Annual Complaints Report 2016-17**

### **Background**

The Conservatoire's Complaints Handling Procedure is available here [https://www.rcs.ac.uk/about\\_us/complaints/](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/about_us/complaints/) and is conducted in line with the statutory requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The procedure provides a quick, simple and streamlined process with a strong focus on early resolution by empowered and trained staff and involves up to two stages:

**Stage 1 Frontline Resolution** seeks to resolve straightforward complaints swiftly and effectively at the point at which the complaint is made, or as close to that point as possible.

**Stage 2 Investigation** is appropriate where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a frontline resolution, or where this is not an appropriate route due to the complexity or seriousness of the case.

### **Recording and Reporting**

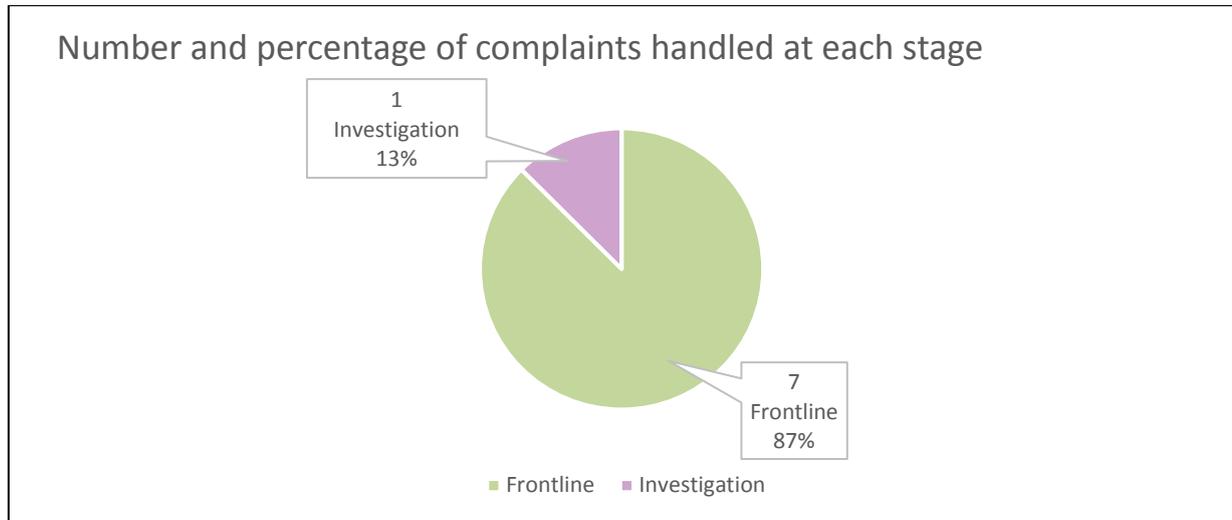
The Conservatoire records all complaints and reports quarterly to senior management and annually to the Board of Governors on key performance information, in accordance with SPSO requirements.

### **Analysis**

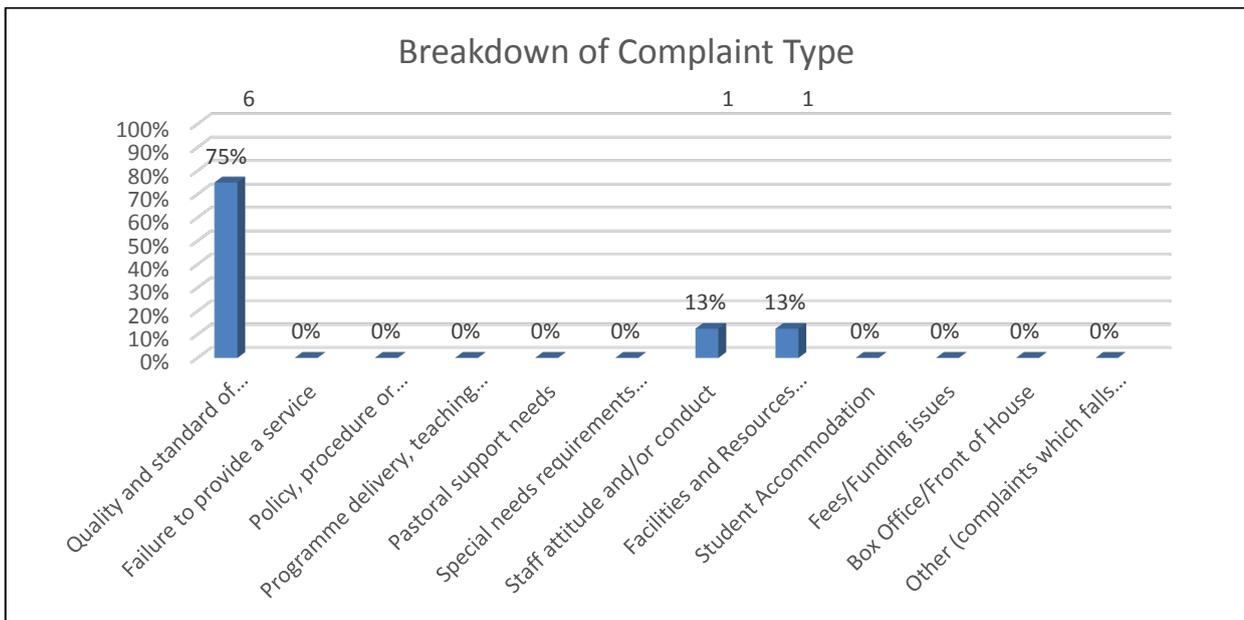
During the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017 the Conservatoire received a total of 8 complaints, 5 of which were upheld, 2 were partially upheld and 1 was not upheld.

<b>Total number of complaints received</b>	8
<b>Stage 1: Frontline</b>	
Number of complaints resolved at Stage 1	7
Number of complaints resolved within the 5 working days timeline	4
Number of complaints where an extension to the timeline has been authorised	3
Number of complaints upheld	5
Number of complaints not upheld	1
Number of complaints partially upheld	2
Number of complaints withdrawn	
<b>Stage 2: Investigation</b>	
Number of complaints resolved at Stage 2	1
Number of complaints resolved within the 20 working days timeline	1
Number of complaints where an extension to the timeline has been authorised	
Number of complaints upheld	1
Number of complaints not upheld	
Number of complaints partially upheld	
Number of complaints withdrawn	

## Number of complaints considered at Stage 1 and Stage 2:



The following bar chart provides a summary of complaints for the period by category type:

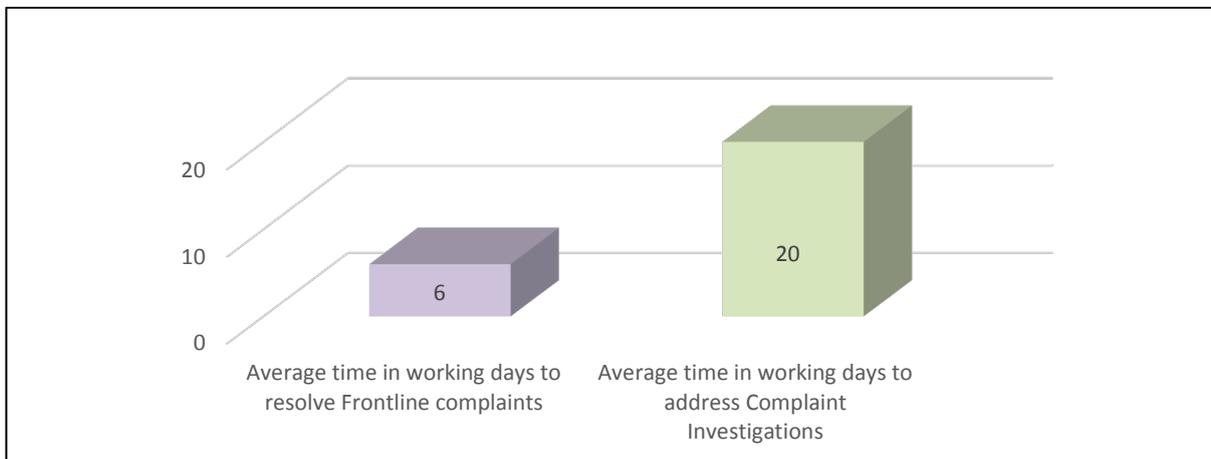


**Complaint Response Times:**

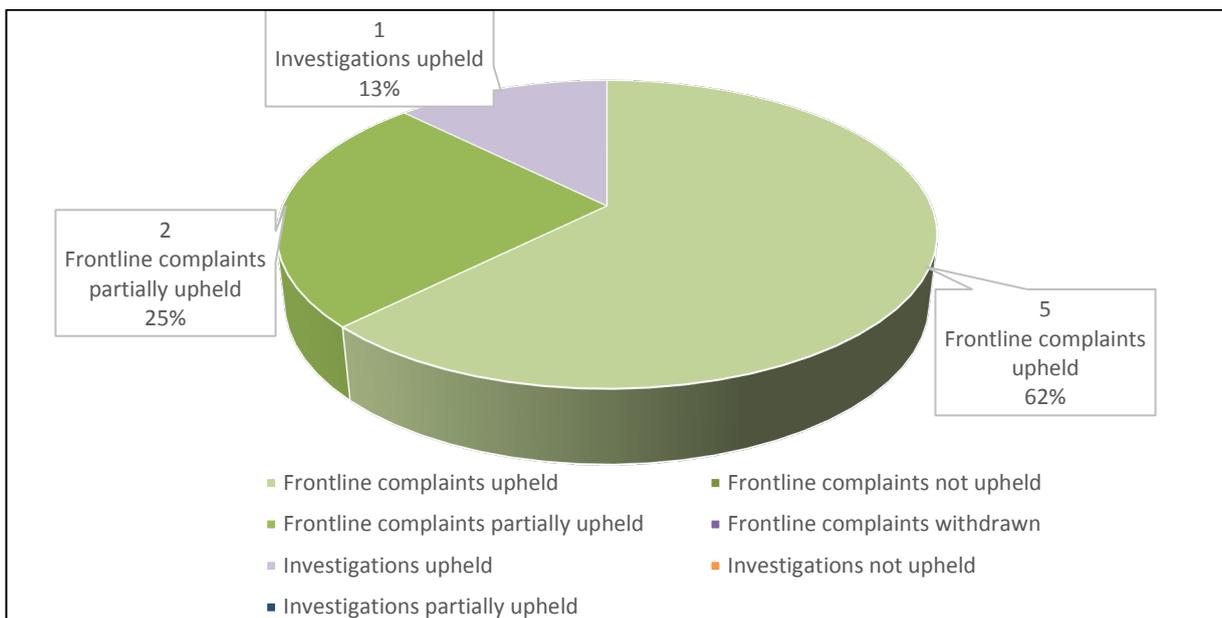
<b>Stage 1: Frontline</b>			<b>as %age</b>
Number of complaints resolved within the 5 working days timeline	4		57%
Number of complaints where an extension to the timeline has been authorised	3		43%
<b>Stage 2: Investigation</b>			
Number of complaints resolved within the 20 working days timeline	1		100%
Number of complaints where an extension to the timeline has been authorised	0		0%

**Adherence to timelines:**

Four frontline complaints were processed in accordance with prescribed timescales. The timescale for the remaining three complaints were extended, with the agreement of the complainants, in order to provide sufficient time to explore a range of different resolution options with the complainant in each case.



**Summary of complaint outcomes:**

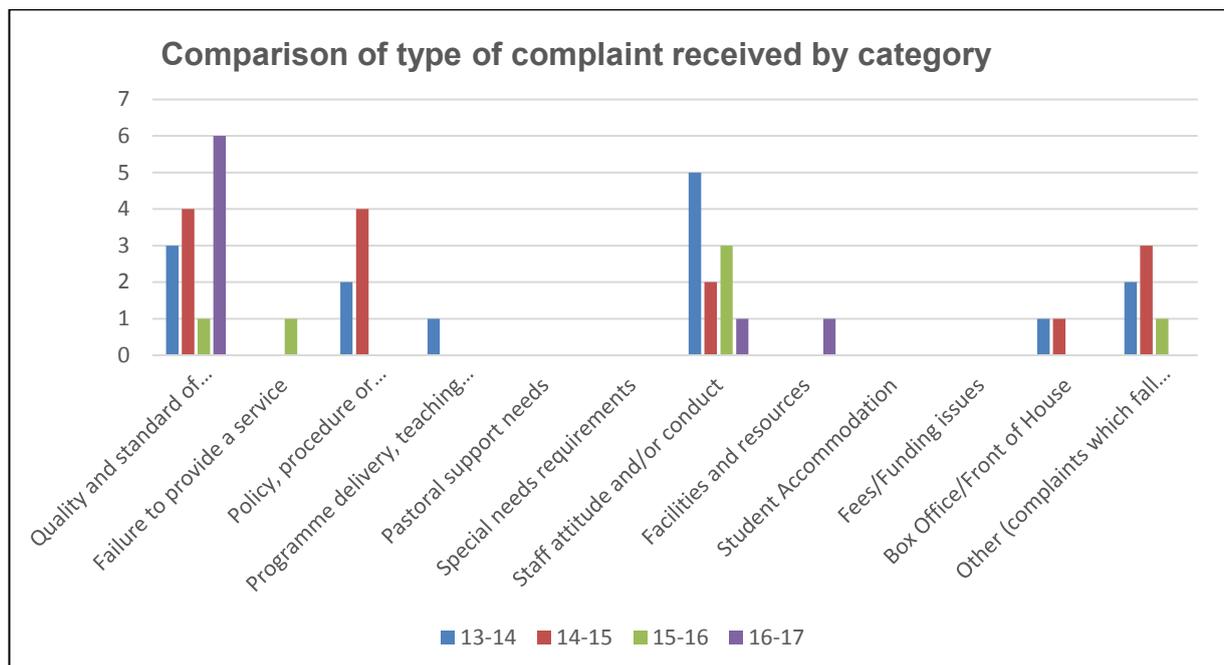
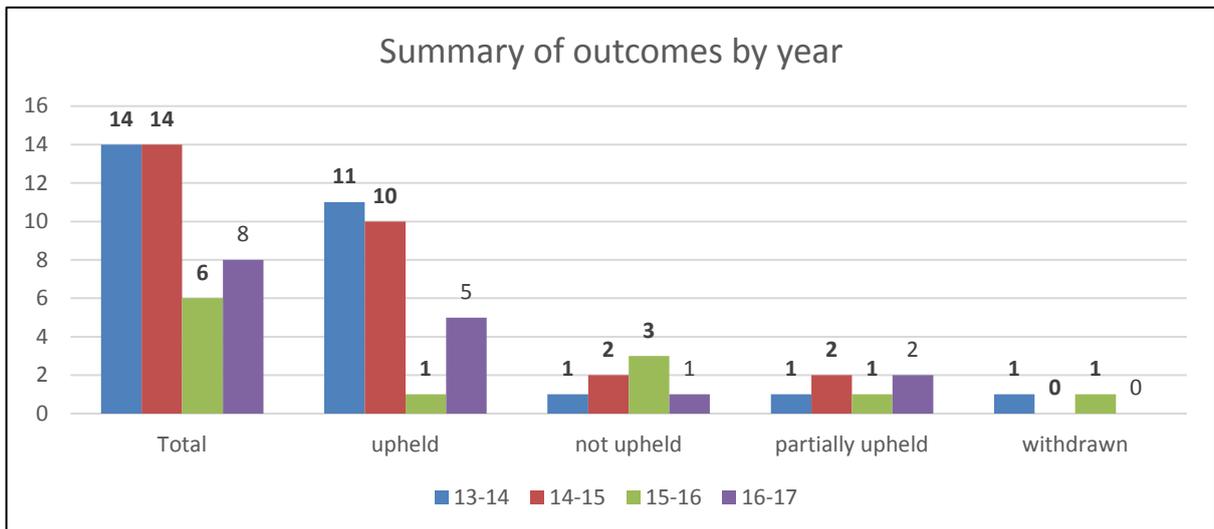


## Trends

The total number of frontline complaints has remained relatively steady in session 2016-17 when compared to the previous session (with a slight increase of two cases) and remains significantly lower than the figure reported when the Conservatoire adopted the procedure in September 2013.

The number of stage 2 investigations has halved (from two cases to one) when compared with the previous session.

Session 2013-14:	Session 2014-15:	Session 2015-16:	Session 2016-17:
Total 14	Total 14	Total 6	Total 8
Frontline 10	Frontline 12	Frontline 4	Frontline 7
Investigations 4	Investigations 2	Investigations 2	Investigations 1



In 2016-17, as in previous sessions, the majority of complaints were received and resolved at the frontline stage, without requiring the need for escalation to stage 2 investigation.

The majority of the complaints (75%) were reported in relation to the Quality and Standard of Service Provision, with the highest level of complaints in this area since the process was introduced in 2013 being reported (standing at double the 2013 figure in this area).

The number of complaints related to staff attitude was significantly reduced in 2016-17 as compared to the previous session (at less than half).

The first complaint since 2013 was reported in the area of Facilities and Resources.

### **Actions/Lessons learned**

The Conservatoire recognises the valuable opportunity to implement improvements across the institution in response to feedback obtained through complaints. Lessons that have been learned, and actions that have been taken, as a result of issues raised through the complaints procedure within the academic session included:

- The introduction of a revised policy, that has been communicated to all relevant staff, which ensures that Life Long Learning students do not experience a change of teacher unless this has been explicitly requested by either the teacher or student.
- A new Life Long Learning student records system was implemented which will help record student progression more accurately and enable conversations related progress to occur at an earlier stage involving students, their parents or carers and teachers.
- A complaint in relation to the attitude of a Life Long Learning member of staff resulted in the fee for the lesson in question being refunded, a change to another teacher being arranged and the member of staff being provided with feedback.
- A refund audition fees, and in one case also application fees, was made in response to two separate complaints reported in this area. Feedback was provided to the Admissions and relevant Programme Teams in order to ensure that errors that been made were not replicated in future.
- An open door access policy to the Head of Juniors was introduced in order to facilitate discussions to take place with parents or carers throughout the year regarding student progress.

### **Life Long Learning and Junior Conservatoires**

Historically the complaints information relating to Life Long Learning (LLL) and Junior Conservatoires has not been recorded in a format that was compatible with the Conservatoire's Complaints Handling Procedure reporting, however this has now been addressed and Life Long Learning data will now be incorporated in future reporting.