

RCS Quarterly Complaints Report - AY25/26 Quarter 4

Introduction

This report summarises the complaints received and the complaints closed between June 1st 2026 and August 31st 2026. Complaints are handled under the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Higher Education.

Rounding Methodology

To protect personal information and individual identification, this data is presented using rounding methodology, including:

- All numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5
- Any number lower than 2.5 is rounded to 0
- Halves are always rounded upwards (e.g. 2.5 is rounded to 5)
- Percentages based on 5 or fewer individuals are suppressed
- Averages based on 5 or fewer individuals are suppressed

A reserved report with exact figures is submitted each quarter to the Conservatoire's Senior Management Team.

Part A - Quarter 4 Key Performance Indicators

KPI 1: Total number of complaints received

This section includes the total number of complaints received at Stage 1 (including those which were subsequently escalated to Stage 2), and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2.

Table 1: Number of complaints received at each stage

Stage	Number of complaints
Stage 1: Frontline Response	0
Stage 2: Investigation	5
CHP not applicable / complaint not progressed	5

Approximately 10 complaints were raised this quarter. A small number of complaints were received at Stage 1 and around 5 complaints were received directly at Stage 2.

Approximately 5 complaints were not progressed by RCS, and these cases are excluded from the data analysis in this report. The reasons for exclusion are included below.

- Complaints related to incidents of noise disturbance coming from the student accommodation which sat within Base's areas of responsibility only
- Complaint related to a service provided by the NHS
- Complaint related to the conduct of a graduate and was assessed as being outside of the Conservatoire's jurisdiction

- Not enough information provided to allow RCS to handle the complaint
- The time limit for making a complaint had been exceeded

Table 2: Status of Stage 1 complaints

Status of Stage 1 complaints	Number of complaints
Total received at Stage 1	0
Total closed at Stage 1	0
Total escalated to Stage 2	0

All complaints received at Stage 1 were escalated to Stage 2.

KPI 2: Adherence to published timescales

This section includes the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were fully closed within the published timescales. The number of complaints closed during this quarter may be different to the number of complaints received. This is because some complaints may have been raised in previous quarters or academic years.

The published timeframe for responding to a complaint is:

Stage 1 – 5 working days

Stage 2 – 20 working days

In some circumstances, these timeframes may be extended in agreement with the complainant and/or when authorised by a manager.

Where a complaint is initially handled at Stage 1 and is escalated to Stage 2, the date of escalation marks the date of closure at Stage 1 and the beginning of the 20-working day timescale for completion at Stage 2.

Table 3: Number of complaints closed within the published timescale

	Number of complaints closed	Number closed within published timescale	% closed within published timescale
Stage 1: Frontline Response	-	-	-
Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	0	0	--%
Stage 2: Investigation	5	0	--%

Approximately 5 cases in total were closed this quarter.

The small number of cases handled at Stage 1 exceeded the published Stage 1 timescale before being escalated to Stage 2. The reason for delay was:

- The availability of the complainant for an initial discussion at the beginning of the process.

- Additional steps required to obtain consent for complaint handling from children when adults raise complaints on their behalf, as required under the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024

Of approximately 5 cases closed at Stage 2, 0 were closed within the published timescale. In each case, the complainants were informed of the reasons for delay, which included:

- The availability of key staff required to respond to the complaint.
- The timeframes associated with Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures which run concurrently to the Complaints Handling Procedure for complaints relating to staff conduct.

KPI 3: Average time in working days to fully respond at each stage

This section includes the average time in working days to fully respond to a complaint at each stage. This relates only to the number of complaints closed during this quarter. Open cases are excluded from this dataset.

Table 4: Average time in working days to fully respond to a complaint

	Average number of working days to fully respond	+ / - compared to published timescales
Stage 1: Frontline Response	12 working days	+ 7 working days
Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	34 working days	+ 14 working days
Stage 2: Investigation	85 working days	+ 65 working days
Stage 2: Total	73 working days	+ 53 working days

The average time that a case was open at Stage 1 before being escalated to Stage 2 was 12 working days. On average, the timeframe to respond to a Stage 1 complaint exceeded the published timescale by 7 days. Cases were delayed by approximately 4 working days due to the additional steps take to obtain children's consent for complaint handling, without which the complaint could not be progressed.

The average time required to fully respond to a complaint at Stage 2 was 73 working days. On average, the timeframe to respond to a Stage 2 complaint exceeded the published timescale by 53 days. While all Stage 2 complaints exceeded the published timescale, this average was influenced by one case in particular which required 6+ months to fully conclude. This was a result of the timeframes associated with Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures which run concurrently to complaints about staff conduct.

KPI 4: Outcome of complaints at each stage

This section reports the outcomes of complaints closed during this quarter. This includes the number and percentage of complaints resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, withdrawn, or not progressed by RCS.

One complaint may be made up of several points of complaint, and these points may have different outcomes. Where some points of complaint are upheld or partially upheld, and other points are not upheld or resolved, this complaint is recorded as partially upheld.

Table 5: Outcome of complaints at each stage

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	Stage 1: Frontline Response	Total %	Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	Stage 2: Investigation	Total %
Resolved	-	-	-	-	-
Upheld	-	-	-	-	-
Partially Upheld	-	-	0	0	--%
Not Upheld	-	-	-	0	--%
Withdrawn by complainant	-	-	-	-	-
Not progressed by RCS	-	-	-	-	-

A small number of complaints handled at Stage 1 remained unresolved and were consequently escalated to Stage 2.

Of approximately 5 complaints closed at Stage 2, the majority were partially upheld, and a small number were not upheld.

Part B - Quarter 4 Trend Analysis

Category breakdown

This section includes a breakdown of the complaints raised and complaints closed during this quarter by category. The number of categories indicated may be greater than the number of complaints raised. This is because one complaint may relate to more than one category.

Table 6: Key of complaints categories

Number	Category Title
1.	Quality and standard of service provision
2.	Failure to provide a service
3.	Policy, procedure, or administrative process
4.	Programme delivery, teaching, and assessment
5.	Pastoral support needs
6.	Special needs requirements
7.	Staff attitude and/or conduct
8.	Facilities and resources (excluding student accommodation)
9.	Student Accommodation
10.	Fees or funding
11.	Box Office or Front of House
12.	Other

Of approximately 5 complaints raised during this quarter, 50% related to policy, procedure, or administrative process; 25% related to programme delivery, teaching and assessment; 25% related to special needs requirements; 50% related to staff attitude and/or conduct; and 25% related to student accommodation.

Of approximately 5 complaints closed this quarter: 50% related to programme delivery, teaching, and assessment; 25% related to special needs requirements; and 75% related to staff attitude and/or conduct.

Comparison to previous years

This section compares the number, stage, and category of complaints raised during quarter 4 to those raised during the same quarter across the previous 5 academic years.

From AY2526, the number of complaints relating to each category may be greater than the number of complaints raised in the relevant academic year. This is because one complaint may relate to more than one category and may therefore be recorded against multiple categories.

Complaints were previously assigned one main category, and this is what has been reflected in previous quarterly and annual reports. This change has been made moving forward because assigning only one category may obscure true figures, making it difficult to identify trends in the data. This is especially the case where one complaint includes multiple points of complaint relating to two or more distinct categories.

A particularly high number of complaints were received in Q4 of academic year 2021-22 as a result of a ticket allocation issue which prompted complaints from multiple Juniors' parents. Not considering this, the number of complaints raised in Q4 has been low across the previous 5 academic years. The number of Stage 1 complaints has decreased overall, while the number of Stage 2 complaints has increased from 0 to around 5.

Across the past 5 academic years, the category breakdown of Q4 complaints is as follows: 10 complaints related to policy, procedure, or administrative process; 5 complaints related to programme delivery, teaching and assessment; a small number of complaints related to pastoral support needs; a small number of complaints related to special needs requirements; 5 complaints related to staff attitude and/or conduct; and a small number of complaints related to student accommodation.

A trend analysis will be included in the annual report at the end of the 2025-26 academic year. This will include the identification of any new patterns that may arise in the quarterly reports and a discussion around root causes and learnings.

In the reserved report only, further information about individual complaints is included in Appendix A.

Quarter 4 Learnings and Action Plan

Learning points noted as a result of complaints closed in this quarter include:

Action / Learning	Staff Responsible	Completion Date
Junior Conservatoire may wish to consider publishing a marking rubric to evidence the consistency in approach to assessing candidates.	Head of Junior Conservatoire (Music)	March 2027
Junior Conservatoire may wish to include information about who will be on audition panels in advance of the auditions taking place.	Head of Junior Conservatoire (Music)	March 2027

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Update website and waivers to clarify use of metal swords and the student's responsibility to meet the minimum safety requirements.	Operations Manager, Short Courses	AY2627
Consider updating terms and conditions to reflect that a pro rata refund will be offered to students who are withdrawn due to failure to meet the minimum safety requirements.	Operations Manager, Short Courses	AY2627
Risk assessment to be reviewed and updated to ensure the documented controls more clearly reflect the arrangements operating in practice.	Operations Manager, Short Courses	Immediately - Complete
Consider delivering the course in an alternative format (i.e. not intensive) at least once per academic year to improve accessibility for any person whose learning style or preferences are incompatible with the intensive format.	Operations Manager, Short Courses	AY2627
A member of staff was required to engage in additional training in response to one complaint.	Human Resources	Immediately – Complete
Guidance around professional boundaries between staff and graduates should be strengthened	Human Resources	AY2627
Enhanced training for staff on race and identity, and managing difficult and sensitive conversations and duty of care	Director of Stage and Screen	AY2627
A review of roles and responsibilities within the creative team in Musical Theatre to ensure clear accountability for decisions relating to sensitive content	Director of Stage and Screen / Director of Musical Theatre	AY2627

An update on outstanding actions will be included in the AY2526 annual complaints report.