



Complaint handling process - overview

This complaint-handling overview can be adapted to your organisation to ensure a robust process is in place to receive, record, manage, resolve and report on complaints.

Complaint received	
Record details	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record key complaint details Store records securely in accordance with your record keeping system, and comply with contractual and legislative obligations <p><i>Throughout the process record details regularly about the complainant, their support person, if any additional communication or support required; details about the subject of the complaint, the complaint issues, how the complaint was resolved/investigated; risks managed and the complaint outcome.</i></p> <p><i>Throughout the process record rationale for all decisions</i></p>
Acknowledge complainant	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the complaint at the time of receipt or as soon as possible afterwards Assure the complainant they are being listened to Advise who their contact person will be Confirm how they wish to communicate Ascertain if support required Explain how you will meet privacy, confidentiality and procedural fairness obligations. Provide information about the process, next steps and expected timeframe <p><i>Aim to resolve complaint promptly with complainant or as soon as possible after the complaint is made.</i></p>
Assess complaint	<p>At this stage, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any immediate risks to safety or wellbeing? What are the key issues? How serious are they? Is support required? Can the complaint be resolved? Does anyone else need to know about this complaint (e.g., police, health services)? What steps are required to manage any risks or conflicts of interest? <p><i>Be mindful that the more promptly a complaint is resolved, the more likely that the complainant will be satisfied.</i></p>

<p>Try to resolve complaint where possible</p>	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport for those involved in the complaints process • Provide an opportunity for complainant to ask questions about the process • Understand what outcome the complainant is seeking • Ensure complainant (and their support) know what is happening with their complaint, when they can expect to hear from you • Consider how to involve the individual, child or young person at key stages of the complaint. • Outline how their parent, carer or advocate will be involved • Explain when and how information will be communicated throughout the process and how they will be supported • Explain any reasons for delays <p><i>Maintain communication throughout process</i></p>
<p>If necessary, consider complaint further/investigate complaint</p>	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how best to approach the matter, and whether the subject matter of the complaint means a formal investigation is necessary • Obtain the relevant information needed to consider the complaint • Give those involved an opportunity to comment • Keep all relevant information secure and maintain confidentiality • If the matter is serious: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consider whether to consult relevant external bodies ○ develop a plan that would not compromise a police or child protection investigation
<p>Final decision</p>	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a good decision that is fair, follows policy, complies with legislation, carries the appropriate weight and is reasonable • Report final findings to the complainant (and other affected parties if appropriate), and provide reasons for your decision • Consider the need or want for ongoing support
<p>Close complaint</p>	<p>When you close the complaint record, make sure you detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outcome • how the complaint was managed • any systemic issues identified • recommendations made • outstanding actions and how they have been or might be addressed
<p>Continuous improvement</p>	<p>At this stage, make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite feedback at the conclusion of the complaints process • Review the complaint process, with the aim of improving service delivery/performance • Take the opportunity to identify any broader trends • Report to management any service improvement requirements • Make adjustments to systems or practice as appropriate, as a result of the complaint