

# COMPLAINT HANDLING



## 1. Acknowledge

- Acknowledge all complaints quickly.
- Repeat what you've heard in your own words. This creates a shared understanding and establishes empathy.
- Tell the complainant what happens next with their complaint and provide contact details for the staff member handling the complaint.
- Reassure all parties that confidentiality will be respected.
- Give an estimate of how long the process may take.
- Invite those involved to participate in the resolution process; engage the care recipient.
- Complaints that are straightforward with low risk can be resolved on first contact.



## 2. Assess

- Assess the complaint and prioritise against other complaints the service is handling.
- Clarify the concerns and issues raised by the complainant.
- Determine the level of risk to the care recipient, other care recipients and the service.
- Ask the care recipient and complainant how they would like to see the complaint resolved.
- Show a positive, professional attitude and thank the complainant for bringing the matter to your attention.

**An effective complaint handling process is fair, accessible, responsive, efficient and contributes to ongoing quality improvement in service delivery.**

## Plan (if required)

- Consider the best way to resolve the complaint (eg conciliation with the complainant or investigation).
- Prepare a short written plan of how the complaint will be managed and any information to be collected.
- Focus attention on the issue to be investigated.
- Remain flexible and make adjustments as required.

## Investigate (if required)

- Gather relevant information to resolve the complaint.
- A fair investigation is impartial, confidential, transparent and timely.
- Keep written notes of discussions.
- Allow complainants to present their point of view.



## 3. Respond

- Consider giving an apology. It can improve your relationship with the complainant.
- Respond to the complainant with a clear decision and explain your reason for the decision.
- Written responses may be more suitable for complex matters.

- Communicate outcomes promptly.



## 4. Follow Up

- Check if complainant is satisfied with the resolution.
- Ask complainants for feedback.
- Outline alternative options available to the complainant.
- Reviews should be carried out by staff who haven't been previously involved.



## 5. Consider

- Are there issues or problems which could be repeated?
- Was there a delay in resolving the complaint?
- Can procedures and policies be reviewed to improve the complaints process?

**Regular contact with the complainant should be maintained throughout the process. It's important to keep the complainant informed if their issue is taking longer to resolve than first advised.**

