

AHCSA Complaints Procedure:

Register information

Procedure No:	AHCSA I AG 001	Version	1
Drafted by:	P Ryan	Approved By Executive on	10/11/2013
Responsible person	CEO	Scheduled Review Date	10/11/2015

Policy Summary

Purpose:	To provide guidance for staff in the process of receiving and handling a complaint
Audience:	AHCSA Secretariat
Supporting Procedures:	N/A
Supporting Guidelines:	HCSCC_Complaints_ A guide for providers Feb 2006

Introduction

This procedure gives guidance to staff on the correct procedure for the receipt, handling and response to complaints about AHCSA Staff and/or services.

Objectives

To ensure that complaints are received, assessed and responded to in a consistent manner that reflects the AHCSA Complaints and Improvement Policy.

Key Points

In brief, when receiving complaints the key points are:

1. Listen to the complaint.
2. Remember, the person is complaining about your business, not about you personally.
3. Record the complaint.
4. Make sure you have all the facts.
5. Ask what the complainant thinks will resolve the problem.
6. Don't promise things that you can't deliver - it is better to under-promise and over-deliver.
7. Be quick in responding to the complaint.
8. Follow up with all parties involved.
9. Encourage and reward your staff for dealing with unhappy customers and handling their complaints well.

Complaints Procedure

Staff members' responsibilities when receiving a complaint:

Step 1.

Any staff member who receives a complaint must:

- Explain the complaints procedure
- Assist the person making the complaint to record the complaint in writing or refer the person making the complaint to a senior staff member, who will assist the person making the complaint to put their complaint in writing.
 - The complaint should be recorded on the approved template
 - Any written material provided by the complainant should be attached to the completed complaint template

- Notify the CEO of the recorded complaint for action.

Step 2.

The CEO (or delegated staff member) will record the complaint in the Complaints Register.

Step 3.

After the details of the complaint are made clear, the CEO (or delegated staff member) member will discuss the complaint with the person making the complaint to ensure:

- that the complaint is understood
- what result the person making the complaint expects
- if the complaint contains merit (i.e. is not vexatious) and should be progressed further.

Step 4.

The CEO (or delegated staff member) handling the complaint must explain:

- the internal complaints procedure to the person making the complaint along with a time frame by which they should be contacted and notified of the outcome of the enquiry
- and if they are unsatisfied with AHCSA's response that they are entitled to make a formal complaint with the Health & Community Service Commissioner

Step 5.

The CEO (or delegated staff member) will examine all records that relate to the incident. If the complaint relates to clinical service delivery the CEO (or delegated staff member) may request advice from the PHMO or other staff with significant knowledge of appropriateness of clinical management.

Step 6.

The staff member who is the subject of the complaint will be asked to tell their story.

Step 7.

The person making the complaint will again be informed of any response and the issues around the complaint explained. This should include:

- an open recognition of any problems in the way the organisation dealt with the matter that was the subject of the complaint.
- an effort should be made to explain the details of the situation when relevant. Senior staff who are not the subject of the complaint should do this
- If appropriate, outside advice or support should be requested.

Step 8.

At the session described in Step 7, an offer should be made to the person making the complaint to meet with the staff member who is the subject of the complaint. Both parties should be able to choose someone to accompany them if they so wish. The focus of such a session is to reconcile differences, make appropriate apologies and identify how things could have been done differently.

Step 9.

The ELG will identify policy and procedure issues that come out of the process and ensure that changes are made accordingly.

Step 10.

The CEO (or delegated staff member mediating the process) will make a brief report to the Board regarding the outcome of the complaint highlighting issues that arise from the incident, and the outcome of the process.

The following action should be taken when appropriate:

- notify a member of the Police if the staff member may have committed an offence
- start appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the staff member if they may have committed a breach of discipline

- notify the relevant board if a registered provider may be guilty of unprofessional conduct.

Step 11.

Details of these outcomes will be recorded in the Register of Complaints.

Step 12.

At the conclusion of the complaint process, copies of all written materials relevant to a complaint are to be handed to:

- a) the HR officer for filing if the complaint is sustained and leads to a disciplinary process, and/or
- b) The Executive Services Team for filing with the Complaints Register

Delegations

Action	Delegated authority
CEO	Delegation of responsibility for handling complaint
HR Officer	Filing of Complaints in Personnel Files
Executive Assistants	Filing of Complaints in Complaints Register

Related Documents

AHCSA AG Complaint Form V1_130925
P AG 003 AHCSA Complaints Policy V_1 130828