

# **Effective Complaints Handling**

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**and**

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Manager**

# Agenda 10.30 – 12.30

- introduction & welcome
- setting the scene
- the complaint process
- groupwork
- resolving complaints
- good complaint management and tools
- questions
- close

# Aims of this session

- Complaint prevention by addressing initial concerns effectively
- Ensuring that complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively with **good communication**.
- Standardising the approach to complaint handling by providers.
- Using complaints to contribute to service development
- Opportunity to share and develop good practice

# Complaints - who needs them?

## Setting the scene....

Complaints are inevitable and can:

- be expensive
  - be anxiety provoking
  - create a lot of additional work for staff and managers
  - interfere with the ‘day’ job
- **BUT** whatever you do: never be defensive!

# Complaints are free feedback

- Highlight systems and processes in need of review
- Leads to organisational/individual learning
- Feeds into continuous improvement
- Helps us to understand the impact of our actions
- Can help professional development
- Legislative requirement (duty)

# CQC expectations

- Regulation 16 receiving and acting on complaints
- People must be able to complain about their care and treatment
- Providers must have a system in place to deal with complaints

# LGSCO expectations

- The LGSCO is the regulator for complaints about social care
- LCC is responsible for the quality of services that it commissions
- If providers are found to be at fault, the council is at fault too
- The PHSCO deals with health related complaints and there is a team for joint complaints

# LCC expectations

Providers must report upon feedback to LCC and deal with complaints and all feedback

- Complaints
- Compliments
- Comments



## PROVIDER COMPLAINT CASE FORM

Provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Patient Service / Users name:</b>	
<b>Complainants Name:</b> <b>Address:</b>  <b>Postcode:</b> <b>Telephone:</b> <b>Email:</b>	
<b>Date received:</b>	
<b>Outline of complaint:</b>	
<b>Lead organisation and lead contact:</b>	
<b>Outcome of investigation:</b> (Please circle)	<i>Upheld/ Not Upheld/ Partially Upheld/ Withdrawn</i>
<b>Action taken:</b> <u>Eg.</u> Apology / Explanation / Change in procedures / Reimbursement / Resolution Meeting	
<b>Lessons learnt:</b>	

Details of investigation (please tick and fill in dates or detail as appropriate, investigation should be proportional):

Details	Date	Additional Notes
Review of daily case notes »		
Assessment information		
Care/Support Plan information		
Telephone records		
Staff interviews		
Further consultation with complainant / SU		
Referral to organisations policy, procedure and guidance		

# Homecare Framework

- In addition to complying with regulation 16 of the 2014 Regulations, the Provider shall report complaints and compliments received regarding the Services to the Council, as required, for monitoring purposes.
- This includes an obligation as part of the KPI's for the Homecare Framework, to provide the Council contracts management team every 6 months with the number of complaints and the number responded to within 28 days as well as number of compliments received.

# Good Practice & Complaints Management Expectations

- Parity with CQC Regulation 16
- Clear and concise complaints policy – details of who to complain to (including alternative contact) and how
- Details included within service user/relatives handbook or supporting material
- On display in the office reception or care home
- Dealt with as quickly as possible - verbal and written communication/acknowledgement
- Clear audit trail – good record keeping
- Openness, honesty and transparency

# Potential issues:

- Understanding the difference between a concern and a complaint
- Poor record keeping/Audit
- ‘Sitting’ on complaints
- Defensiveness and/or finger wagging and misinterpretation
- Poor / inadequate responses
- Escalation

# Common issues (ombudsman)

- Clear information about fees
- Accuracy of billing and invoices
- Protection of belongings
- Managing expectations
- Giving notice
- Quality of care

# Principles of Good Complaint Handling

- **Listen**
  - Act quickly (nip it in the bud)
  - Listen to the impact of the issue
  - Restore relationships
- **Respond**
  - Take 'ownership'
  - Think holistically
  - Inter - team / service working
  - Proportionality
- **Improve**
  - Implement the learning to achieve:
    - skilled and supported staff
    - service improvement / reduced costs
    - reduced risk

# Nipping in the bud

- How do your staff respond to complaints?
- How do you resolve grumbles, groans & concerns?
- Can the complaint be resolved quickly?
- Do other people need to be involved?
- All staff should have good customer care skills
- Resolving grumble and groans at an appropriate level.
- 48hr rule of thumb
- What can you/others do to resolve the matter eg. request a review.



# Question time

- What do you do well and what might you do differently about how you handle complaints or nip them in the bud in your in your service?

15 mins

# Good Complaint Handling

- Recognise what is a complaint: assess the risk
- Make direct contact with the complainant: what outcome do they want?
- Create a complaint plan with a timescale
- Agree the elements of the complaint
- Keep people informed, especially if timescales slip during the investigation
- At what level should the sign off be?
- Provide the response, letting the complainant know what has been done to improve services and that they can come to LCC if still dissatisfied

# Think complainant

- Accessibility
- What are the main issues
- Acknowledge the impact
- See through the fog of emotion
- What went wrong?
- Persistent complainants

# Think out of the box!

- What is the best approach?
- Will a phone call to say sorry do?
- Will a personal visit be possible?
- Would a card and / or a bunch of flowers work in this case?

# Think advocacy

- Is there family conflict and disagreement or conflicting professional opinions?
- Is the person becoming lost in the arguments?
- Advocacy is independent, confidential and free and can save time / money and make complaints clearer
- Contact phone number :0300 3230965
- The email address is [advocacyfocus.org.uk](mailto:advocacyfocus.org.uk)

# Learning from complaints

Identify recommendations:

- for the complainant
- for the staff concerned are there training / development needs or HR processes to be followed?
- for the continuous improvement of the organisation

# Group discussion.

- How do we feedback organisational learning to the quality improvement team as strategic learning?

15 mins

# Proactive Complaint Management

- Horizon scanning (eg new contracts)
- Identifying themes
- Engaging staff and managing the messages given
- Be clear and straightforward, manage expectations and work to timescales
- Recognising complaints as opportunities for the individual, team and organisational development
- Implementing and reviewing the learning



# LCC Template Letter

## Template final response letter

### Name and Address

Our ref [Yarg]  
Your ref [Yarg]

Our contact details; e mail and phone [insert]

Date

Dear [add name]

Heading, e.g. Complaint about...

The investigation into the concerns you raised on [insert date] is now complete.

I will address each of the points as outlined in my earlier acknowledgement letter to you.

[Repeat each individual point of complaint, and follow each one with what you found in the investigation. Put this as a numbered list if there is more than one issue].

#### 1. [Point one]

I have found that...

#### 2. [Point two]

I have found that...

### Outcome

As a result of your complaint we have taken the following action (if not already mentioned above).

1. [action]

2. [action]

3. etc

I would like to thank you for bringing these matters to our attention. We welcome comments from people who use our services and aim to use these to improve our services.

If you are not fully satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, who you can contact at:

Tel: 0300 051 0514

Address: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Counley, CV4 0EH

Website: [www.lgo.com.uk](http://www.lgo.com.uk)

Yours sincerely

Name  
Job title

# Toolkits and resources

- Healthwatch toolkit

<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/healthwatch-launches-drive-improve-social-care-complaints-handling>

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/adult-social-care/resources-for-care-providers>

# Ombudsman templates and resources

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN Menu Search View Display Options

Home > Adult Social Care > Resources for care providers

## Resources for care providers

- Guidance reports - lessons from complaints
- Template procedures and signposting guides
- How to handle complaints - guidance and template letters
- Information sheets - FAQs for providers
- Training for care providers
- Posters and other material

### Name and Address

Our ref [if any]  
Your ref [if any]

Our contact details; e mail and phone [insert]

Date

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Coventry CV4 9FH



# Any Questions ?