# ComplainT HANDLING PROCEDURE

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| Procedure number | <<insert number>> | Version | <<insert number>> |
| Drafted by | <<insert name>> | Approved by Board on | <<insert date>> |
| Responsible person | <<insert name>> | Scheduled review date | <<insert date>> |

## Introduction

This is a template procedure for handling complaints.

## Purpose

When responding to complaints and feedback, staff and volunteers will act in accordance with complaint management policies as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The 5 key stages, Receive, Acknowledge, Assess & Investigate, Determine Outcome and Close Complaint, in our complaint system are outlined below.

## Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, the complaint and its supporting information should be recorded. You should also assign a unique identifier/number to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

* Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received.
* Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want.
* Any other relevant information.
* Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

Note: Organisations may wish to consider recording complaints resolved at first point of contact, the frontline. Such record keeping will arguably add to the pool of data organisations regularly analyse to identify system issues and track more accurately the complaint handling activities of staff.

## Acknowledge

You should acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When appropriate you may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

Note: The suggested time frame may vary according to the size and capacity of your organisation

## Assess and Investigate

**Initial assessment**

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, you should confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within your control. You should also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, you should consider:

* How serious, complicated, or urgent the complaint is.
* Whether the complaint raises concerns about people’s health and safety.
* How the person making the complaint is being affected.
* The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed.
* Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

**Investigating the complaint**

After assessing the complaint, you should consider how to manage it. You may:

* Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
* Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about
* Investigate the claims made in the complaint

You should keep the person making the complaint up to date on the progress, particularly if there are any delays. You should also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions you decide to take should be tailored to each case and consider any statutory requirements.

## Determine and Justify Outcome

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

* The outcome of the complaint and any action taken.
* The reason/s for your decision.
* The remedy or resolution/s that you have proposed or put in place, and
* any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

## Close the Complaint

**Document**

You should keep records about:

* How you managed the complaint.
* The outcome/s of the complaint including.
* Whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated.
* Any recommendations made to address problems identified.
* Any decisions made on those recommendations.
* Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

**Analyse**

You should ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored, and reported to the complaint management manager, senior management, or the chair of your governing body. By looking for any trends in complaints you can recommend improvements to your systems and processes.

## Authorisation

[Signature of Board Secretary]  
[Date of approval by the Board]  
[Name of Organisation]