

Your World First



Complaints Handling



Complaints Handling Procedure

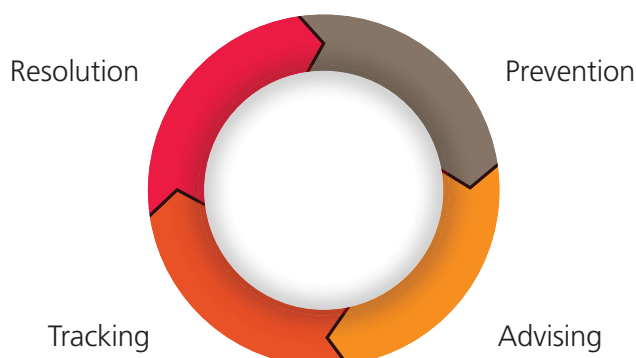
Getting it right first time

The Complaints Handling Procedure was designed to streamline complaints within the education sector, with local early resolution by “empowered and well trained staff.”

However, all too often the allegations involve complex legal issues, which can have wider repercussions from a reputational and legal liability perspective. The Ombudsman recently reported that complaints are on the increase. It is not clear whether that is because of this new procedure, or because of the wider cultural change where the student is the consumer. However, this trend looks set to continue and indeed accelerate.

How we can help

Based on current trends, we have broken our service into four distinct components:



Prevention

We focus on prevention rather than cure. We have a number of options to upskill your staff in dealing with complaints:

Complaints Handling Workshop

Technical training and soft skills to assist Complaint Handlers in running investigations, making an effective apology and articulating risk to stakeholders.

Online Training

Aimed at staff who will deal with Stage One complaints, this 15 minute session explains the key components of handling complaints fairly and quickly.

Learning Hub

Our secure extranet knowledge sharing zone provides your Stage 2 Complaints Handlers with access to our best practice guidance on managing an investigation and a portal of outcome letters.

Advising

Our Complaints Handling team are education sector specialists from a spectrum of areas, all with particular experience advising on discrimination and wider regulatory issues.

We can assist you at all stages of the complaints process, including formulating and reviewing responses. We can also advise on disciplinary and other processes that present an inherent risk of complaints or legal claims.

Tracking

To assist you in your duty to record, publicise and learn from complaints, we can offer you detailed reporting systems and a secure extranet to track complaints.

Resolution

Confidential Recommendations

Where complaints have identified failings in the process we can assist you with advice and action plans to rectify institutional concerns. Our recommendations are legally privileged.

Mediation

Our CMS mediation unit has mediators experienced in resolving education disputes. Approximately 80% of disputes referred to mediation are resolved within a day. It may not be suitable for all cases, but it can be helpful in complex or sensitive complaints, or where you suspect that referral to the Ombudsman is likely.

Litigation

The education sector, like many others, is increasingly litigious with many complainants resorting to legal proceedings either before the complaints handling procedure has completed or in the event of an unfavourable outcome.

Our team deals with these actions in the Sheriff Courts and Court of Session. We can also provide valuable input at the early stages of a complaint by advising on:

- strategy to prevent a complaint escalating; and
- the merits of a complaint identified as posing a litigation risk.

Cost

We recognise that you need certainty on cost and to know that you are getting value for money. We offer a free initial assessment of each complaint, followed by a costing for dealing with it, allowing you to make strategic decisions as necessary. We offer a range of costing options including fixed fees, volume discounts and milestone billing.



Contact us

To find out more about our Complaints Handling services or if you need advice on a particular complaint please contact one of our specialists:



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