

# Complaints Management

## How effective is your DHB's complaints management system?



Health and Disability Commissioner  
*Te Toihou Hauora, Hauātanga*

### Is information given to consumers about their right to complain?

- Are consumers told that they can make a complaint directly to the DHB?
- Do consumers know which staff member they can complain to?
- Do you seek feedback from consumers and/or complainants about how they view the DHB's complaints management processes?

### Are staff given training on responding to consumers' concerns?

- Are front line staff, including health care providers and administrative staff, given training on how to recognise a complaint and respond directly to concerns when they are first raised?
- Are staff given training on how the DHB processes complaints?
- Overall, is there a positive and proactive culture among staff in respect of dealing with and responding to complaints?
- Do staff view complaints as a learning opportunity?

### Is there a centralised complaints coordination department?

- Is there an individual or a team responsible for coordinating complaints received?
- Is that individual or team given training on effective complaints management?

### Is there an effective electronic system for logging complaints?

- Are complaints consistently logged on your system?
- Does your system allow for collation of complaints data, including the number of complaints received and the outcome of complaints?
- Are trends identified from the complaints data?
- Can any complaint trends be used to effect quality improvement?
- Are learnings from your complaints disseminated to other DHBs?
- Are senior management, and the Board and Chairs, periodically provided with the complaints data?

### Is there an effective system for logging positive feedback from consumers?

- Is positive feedback used to reinforce and recognise quality improvement?

### Are there established levels of accountability for senior clinical staff involved in a complaint?

- Must senior clinical staff take responsibility for complaints about care provided by the team for whom they are responsible?

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## Responding to actual complaints

### At the front line

- Is the consumer showing signs of dissatisfaction with the service they have received?

### What are the DHB's expectations for handling complaints?

- Should the complaint be escalated to a senior staff member? Which senior staff member should be notified?
- How should the complaint be recorded? Should it be logged on the complaints database or notified to the complaints processing department?

### What is the consumer unhappy about?

- Can the concerns be diffused through honest and open communication?
- Could a misunderstanding have arisen from cultural differences?
- Would the complainant and/or consumer benefit from the assistance of an interpreter?
- Would the complainant and/or consumer benefit from talking to a more senior staff member?
- Is an apology necessary?

## When a formal complaint is made

### Who provided services to the complainant and/or consumer? Who was in charge of that service?

- Are those staff aware that a complaint has been made?
- Have staff been encouraged to contact the consumer and/or complainant directly to try to resolve the complaint?

### What processes would be the most effective in achieving resolution for this particular consumer and/or complainant?

- What is the consumer hoping to achieve by making a complaint?
- Which staff members should be involved in responding to the complaint? Would it be appropriate to involve the staff member(s) complained about and/or the senior staff member in charge of the services provided to the consumer?
- Is a resolution meeting appropriate? How soon can a meeting be arranged?
- Does the consumer and/or complainant require the assistance of an interpreter?
- Is an apology necessary?

### Has the DHB complied with the requirements in Right 10 of the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights?

- Has the consumer and/or complainant recently been provided with an update about the status of their complaint?