



# Complaint Handling

# What is a complaint?

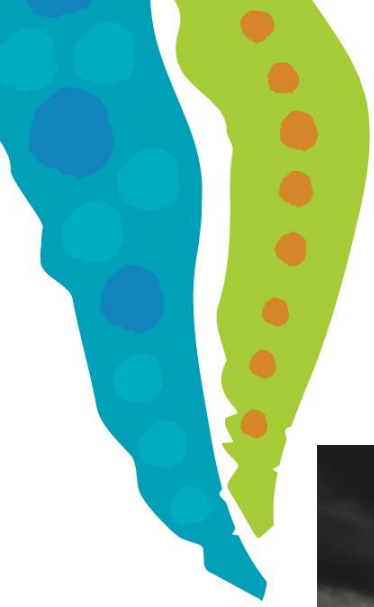
*“A complaint is an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person, where a response or resolution is expected”*



# Minimising complaints

- Address the elephant in the room
- Employee dissatisfaction or conflict are not complaints
- However they need to be addressed early to avoid the problem escalating
- Managers should intervene if they see any concerns
- Most issues if addressed early and clearly can be resolved on an informal basis



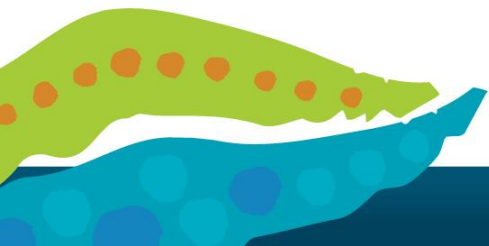


# How do you know when something's brewing?



# Receiving the Complaint

- Identify an initial contact person – normally a senior manager or HR
- How will the complaint be lodged – does it have to be in writing?
- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible
- Advise the respondent that a complaint has been made and explain the complaint process that will follow

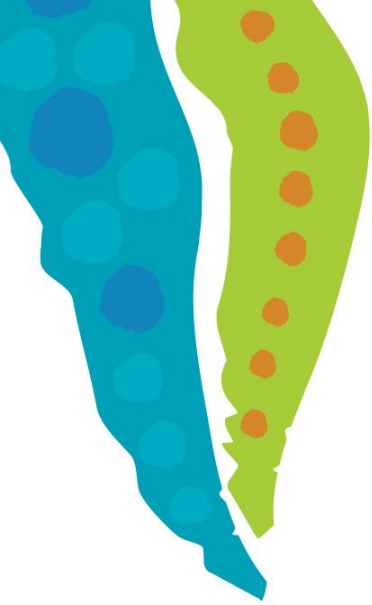




# Address the complaint

- Your complaint policy should provide flexibility in how matters are addressed – not every complaint needs to be formally investigated
- Speak to the complainant and talk through the options that are available for resolution – formal and informal
- What is the complainant hoping to achieve?





# Informal resolution

- The parties talking directly to one another if they are both comfortable to do so
- The Manager addressing each party individually
- The Manager, or a third party, addressing the issues with both employees in an attempt to come to a resolution
- Informal resolution is focused very much on resolving the issues, rather than a determination as to who was right or wrong

# Formal resolution

- Investigation – determine if it's internal or external?
- Ensure you fully understand the nature of the complaint – may need to formally interview the complainant
- Provide the respondent with enough information to ensure they understand and can respond to the allegations
- Interview relevant witnesses



# Formal resolution cont....

- Assess all of the information and make findings
- Should be satisfied that it is 'more probable than not' that what is alleged to have happened did happen
- If the complaint is substantiated then consider if any disciplinary action is required
- Even if the complaint is not substantiated it may still require action i.e. refresher training, update to policy, conflict resolution

# Support

- Complaint processes are difficult for all parties involved
- Ensure staff are advised of any support available i.e Employee Assistance Program, internal contact persons, opportunity to have a support person present at any meeting
- Be clear on timelines and keep all parties up to date if timelines are not going to be met
- Strict confidentiality is required at all stages of the process. Information is only shared on a need to know basis
- Consider working arrangements whilst the complaint is being resolved



# Case study 1

- Receive an email from a medical receptionist advising that they are in conflict with one of the RN's who they find to be rude and disrespectful.
- The medical receptionist requests that the RN be told that they are not to speak directly to the receptionists and that all contact should be via the Practice Manager.

# Case study 2

- A staff member asks to have a meeting with you. In the meeting they advise that they want to lodge a complaint against their Manager because they feel they have been treated unfairly.
- The reason being that their application to attend a conference has been denied. The staff member advises they know that other staff have been approved to attend other training recently.



# Case study 3

- A staff member has been off work for the last 3 weeks due to an undisclosed medical condition.
- You receive a letter from the staff member advising that she has been off work due to sexual harassment and bullying from a male co-worker. The staff member wants to return to work but feels unsafe to do so.
- The complainant nominates 4 other people within the organisation who have received similar treatment or who have been witness to the behaviour.







