

<b>ABACUS</b>	<b>Manual:</b>	ABACUS Training Courses Manual
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<b>Complaints Policy [Policy 06]</b>	<b>Issue Date:</b>	August 2003
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	<b>Written By:</b>	Management Team
	<b>Approved:</b>	Directors
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## **POLICY**

1. All students/learners using ABACUS Services have the right to visible and accessible information about how to make a complaint and the procedures should they do so.
2. All students/learners using ABACUS Services will have their complaints dealt with fairly, thoroughly and promptly to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible in accordance with the Health & Disability Code of Consumer Rights (1994).

## **PERSONNEL**

All students/learners

## **PRINCIPLES**

- ABACUS Services are committed to providing a high quality client/customer focused service. We therefore welcome and appreciate feedback from students/learners using our services about the services we provide. Feedback provides a vehicle for a continuous quality improvement in ABACUS Services.
- ABACUS Services are committed to investigating all complaints thoroughly and speedily.
- Complaints may be received verbally or in writing.
- All complaints are to be treated confidentially.
- Advocates may become involved at any stage of a complaint.
- All investigations into complaints received will take into account the rights of the complainant and any staff about whom the complaint involves.
- Compliments are also an important component of client feedback. All feedback is sent to the appropriate service/team/staff member.
- ABACUS Directors may convene a complaints committee to independently review the outcome of any complaint where the complainant feels the issue has not been resolved.

## PROCEDURE

### Verbal Complaints

Where appropriate, verbal complaints will be dealt with at source, however if unable to be resolved, the complainant must be given the option of taking the issue further with the Manager of the service and/or the Directors. At this point, the procedure outlined below for written complaints must be followed.

### Written Complaints

1. It is the responsibility of any staff member who receives a written complaint concerning an individual or ABACUS services to direct the complaint immediately to the Manager (or where the complaint is about a manager the complaint must be forwarded to the Directors).
2. **Within 24 hours** of receiving the complaint the Manager is to send a copy of the written complaint to ABACUS Directors for investigation.
3. The Manager will send written acknowledgment to the complainant within 2 working days of receiving the complaint.
4. The Directors will consider the legal, contractual and media implications of the complaint and advise the Executive Director accordingly within **2 working days**.
5. Once the Directors has been notified or received a copy of the complaint they are then responsible for overseeing or investigating the complaint and formulating a response within **15 working days**.
6. If more than one service is involved, line managers may organise a meeting with the various parties concerned.
7. The complainant will be offered the opportunity of further information / clarification following the investigation. The letter of reply may also outline changes in practice ABACUS services are instigating to correct and/or improve problems highlighted.
8. Where further investigation is required, the Directors will keep the complainant fully informed of progress in writing on the complaint, and negotiate a revised timeframe.

### Reporting/Monitoring

- The Directors will ensure that student/learner feedback and complaints are regularly audited.
- All complaints will be recorded on a central register, and will be reviewed at Management meetings.
- The Directors are responsible for ensuring final sign off of complaints and the associated CQI actions.

## **AUTHORITY**

ABACUS Directors are responsible for overseeing the complaints policy for ABACUS Services. Managers and/ or Directors are responsible for investigating the complaint, providing a written response to the complainant, and following resolution of the complaint, ensuring a review of the incident assists in minimising and/or preventing a repeat incidence.

## **REFERENCES**

National Mental Health Standards  
ABACUS Counselling, Training & Supervision Policy Manual