

Complaints Procedure/Protocol (1.0)

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1. Scope

To outline the procedures to be followed by all clinical and administration staff who work in Occupational Health at the University of Bristol and relevant temporary clinical staff as deemed appropriate.

This procedure only relates to complaints made by staff or ‘clients’. For the purposes of this document a ‘client’ of the Occupational Health Service (OHS) will include all staff employed by the University and vocational students who receive services from us. Other students are referred to the University of Bristol [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

2. General Principles

We aim to ensure that:

- their comments and complaints will be listened to and acted on with the importance and courtesy they would expect;
- No person should feel discriminated against for making a complaint;
- We will consider fully, respond appropriately and resolve, where possible, any comments or complaints ourselves or, in the event that this is not possible, we will direct the complainant to our Director of Safety & Health, where they can obtain advice on how to pursue the matter further.
- Positive feedback can take many formats, but when received face-to-face it should be accepted graciously ensuring the client is treated in a professional manner.
- When receiving a complaint or concern remember that first impressions will influence all further communications. It is therefore important to actively listen to the complainant, make notes of the details and ask questions if clarification is required.
- Assure the complainant that their care will not be adversely affected as a result of having made a complaint.
- All complaints should be taken seriously, no matter how seemingly unimportant. All discussions with the complainant should be polite and courteous. It can be easy to turn a negative experience into a positive one by listening with empathy, remaining calm and respectful, not accepting blame, making excuses or blaming colleagues. Any complaint should be accepted as feedback and a chance to improve.
- Most complainants wish to be satisfied that action is being taken with regard to the issue raised in their complaint and that steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence of the problem. It is therefore important that the complainant's immediate clinical needs are met, which may require action before any matters relating to the complaint are dealt with. The needs may include, but not limited to, first aid and emergency services or counselling support.
- An apology given sincerely can often be sufficient for the complainant. Remember the majority of complaints or concerns can be dealt with, to the satisfaction of the complainant, by the person receiving the initial contact.
- Complaint records must be kept separate from occupational health records, subject to the need to record any information that is strictly relevant to a client's health in their records. This applies to all reports and letters produced during a complaint investigation.
- If a complaint is received in writing that alleges injury or harm then **careful** consideration should be given to advise the Insurance Office for litigation

purposes.

3. Process

3.1 Positive Feedback

Whatever the format (card, gift, verbal, email, letter) of the positive feedback received, the individual offering the compliment should be thanked. As this may require a written response from OHS, it is important that this information is relayed to the Senior Occupational Health Advisor (SOHA)/Administration Systems Manager, so that an appropriate response can be sent. Although unlikely, if a gift is received with a monetary value in excess of £100 then a University of Bristol Gift and Hospitality Registration Form needs to be completed and passed to the Director of Safety and Health.

3.2 Process for Staff/Clients

The University of Bristol Occupational Health Service, (OHS), seeks to ensure all its clients receive the agreed level of contracted or ad-hoc services in a skilful and diligent manner. There are times when positive feedback is received, which can be seen as a testimony to that service goal.

However, there are times where the service falls short of the client's expectations. Complaints or concerns can be discussed during contract/Service Level Agreement (SLA) review meetings although a School/Faculty /Service, or an individual, may contact OHS, at any time to raise issues of concern.

To ensure OHS records positive feedback as well as to ensure that any complaints or concerns are dealt with in a timely manner, the following protocol will apply.

If any client has a complaint or concern about the Service they have received from the Occupational Health Physician (OHP) or Occupational Health Advisor/Nurse (OHA/OHN) or OH Administrator, or any of the staff working in this Service, they should let us know by following the process below.

3.3 How to make a Complaint/Raise a Concern

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a formal complaint, we would like you to let us know, within 48 hours of the incident occurring.

A client may approach any member of staff of the Service with a complaint (this can be carried out in a private area if necessary). The staff member will explain the complaints procedure and will ensure the concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if the details are clear and as specific as possible about the complaint.

3.4 Verbal Complaints/Concerns:

- The OHS staff member who receives a verbal complaint should try to solve the problem immediately, if possible. If the staff member cannot solve the problem right away they should ask a senior staff member for advice.
- After talking through the problem the senior member/manager should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable to the complainant then the senior member/manager should clarify, with the complainant, how the results of the complaint will be relayed to the complainant, e.g. through a meeting, verbally, by letter or email. Some complainants do not wish to receive anything 'formal' and are satisfied that they have been able to air their concerns. The Senior OHA should then be informed of the complaint as soon as possible after receipt, so that details can be recorded in the Excel "Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback" log (template in Appendix 1).
- If the suggested course of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or the senior member/manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to the Senior OHA.

3.5 Written Complaints/Concerns:

- When a complaint is received in writing (letter or email) it should be passed to the Senior OHA to carry forward. Where circumstances are such that it is practical for an OHS staff member to deal with the issue, then the Senior OHA should be informed as soon as possible after receiving the complaint, so that details can be recorded in the Excel "Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback" log.
- The Senior OHA or OHS staff member must send a letter/email acknowledgment (template letter in appendix 3) to the complainant within 5 working days and record details in the "Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback" log. Where possible, the Senior OHA should be the named person dealing with the complaint throughout the rest of the process, if agreeable to the complainant. Again, if circumstances are such that it is practical for the OHS staff member to be the named person, then they should deal with the complaint throughout the rest of the process.
- The investigation into the complaint will now begin. If necessary further details can and should be obtained from the complainant. In order to obtain all the facts behind the complaint it may be necessary to liaise with other members of the team (e.g. OHP, or if it is about a member of the Administration team, the Administration Systems Manager). Please use form available (Appendix 2).

- Details of the complaint and which member of staff is involved will only be disclosed to those people who have a need to know for the purpose of the investigation.
- The investigation should ideally be completed within a timescale of up to 10 working days from receipt of the complaint. If it becomes necessary to exceed this timescale then a further letter should be sent to the complainant, by the investigating senior member/manager, explaining the reason for the delay (template letter in Appendix 4).
- Once the investigation is complete the investigating senior member/manager should write a report in response to the complaint, which should be forwarded to the complainant (template letter in Appendix 5). The details of the episode will then be updated in the Excel “Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback” log.
- Occasionally the complainant will require clarification of points given in the final report, so a further letter may need to be written by the investigating senior member/manager.
- If no further contact is received from the complainant within two weeks of sending the final report/letter, then the investigating senior member/manager should close down the episode in the Excel “Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback” log.

3.6 Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of confidentiality. If the complaint is on behalf of someone else, we have to know that whoever is raising the complaint has permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of physical or mental illness) of providing this.

We hope that, if there is a problem, the client will use our Service complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve the way we work.

However, if they feel they cannot raise their complaint with us or they are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation, they can contact the Director of Safety and Health, who will take up their complaint.

4. Escalating the episode to University level

In the event that the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of the investigation undertaken by OHS, the Director of Safety and Health will advise on the appropriate route, based on the nature of the complaint, on behalf of the University Registrar and Secretary.

Appendix 1 – Complaints, Concerns and Positive Feedback Log

Complaints received									
Date complaint received	Name of Complainant	Nature of complaint	Named (UoB)OHS person liaising directly with complainant	Name of (UoB)OHS staff undertaking investigation into complaint	Date initial letter/email sent out	Date follow-up letter/email sent	Date complaint closed down	Compliant with standards/Protocol?	If relevant, reason/reasons for non-compliance with standards /Protocol

Appendix 2 – Client complaint form

Occupational Health Service

1-9 Old Park Hill

Bristol

BS2 8BB

Tel: 0117 331 7655

Fax: 0117 331 7532

Email Staff: bristol-occhealth@bristol.ac.uk



CLIENT COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE

1. PERSONAL DETAILS			
Full Name:		Date of Birth:	
Job Role/Course of Study		Faculty/School /Service	
Address for correspondence in connection with the Complaint <i>(In the case of a Group Complaint, please attach a list of complainants on a separate sheet of paper)</i>			
Postcode:		Telephone number:	
Email Address:			
PLEASE NOTE:	The Occupational Health Service will communicate with you about your complaint by email or by post to the address you have given above. It is important that you keep your contact details up to date and notify the Occupational Health Service of any changes.		

2. COMPLAINT DETAILS

2.1 Outline of your complaint, including dates of actions.
Please:

Use additional sheets, if necessary.

Attach any correspondence that you have had concerning your complaint and all other relevant documentation, such as appointment letters/reports from OHS.

2.3 Please explain the steps you have taken, who you have approached, together with dates, to bring your complaint informally.

2.4 Please explain why it has not been possible to resolve your complaint informally.

2.5 Please indicate what outcome or further action you are seeking.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF THE REASON FOR YOUR COMPLAINT IS NOT CLEAR THIS FORM WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU WITH A REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION WHICH MUST BE ANSWERED WITHIN SEVEN DAYS.

3. DECLARATION

I declare that the information given in this form is to the best of my knowledge true, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 - Complaint acknowledgment letter

Occupational Health Service

1-9 Old Park Hill

Bristol

BS2 8BB

Tel: 0117 331 7655

Fax: 0117 331 7532

Email Staff: bristol-occhealth@bristol.ac.uk



Ref:

Date:

To....

Address

Dear Mr, Mrs etc

Re:

I am writing with regard to the concerns that you raised about(insert details here) in your letter dated -----.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the distress and upset the situation caused you, but to also thank you for raising these issues.

I have instigated an investigation and will write to you again when I am in a position to provide you with a full response.

In the meantime, if there is anything further you wish to discuss with me, then please do not hesitate to contact me via the above telephone number or address.

Yours sincerely

Name of Investigator

Job Title of Investigator

Appendix 4 – Complaint investigation delay letter

Occupational Health Service

1-9 Old Park Hill

Bristol

BS2 8BB

Tel: 0117 331 7655

Fax: 0117 331 7532

Email Staff: bristol-occhealth@bristol.ac.uk



Ref:

Date:

To....

Address

Dear Mr, Mrs etc

Re:

I am writing further to my letter dated *insert date*, with regard to the concerns that you raised about -----.

Unfortunately there has been a delay in completing my investigation because -----
-----.

I estimate that I will have a response for you by *insert date*

In the meantime, if there is anything further you wish to discuss with me, then please do not hesitate to contact me via the above telephone number or address.

Yours sincerely

Name of Investigator

Job Title of Investigator

Appendix 5 – Complaint report letter

Occupational Health Service

1-10 Old Park Hill
Bristol
BS2 8BB

Tel: 0117 331 7655

Fax: 0117 331 7532

Email Staff: bristol-occhealth@bristol.ac.uk



Ref:

Date:

To....

Address

Dear Mr, Mrs etc

Re:

I am writing further to my letter dated *insert date*, with regard to the concerns that you raised about ----- . As the investigating manager I have completed the investigation and I am now in a position to provide you with a full response.

-----**(this bit will be the investigation and what has been found with reference to the complaint)**-----

I hope that I have been able to address the concerns that you raised, however, if you do have any outstanding issues, a meeting can be arranged with the appropriate manager and the senior staff involved. If you would like this to be arranged for you, please contact me on the above telephone number.

You may prefer to receive a further written response to any issues that you feel have not been fully addressed in this response. If this is the case, please do not hesitate to contact me again with details of your outstanding concerns and any additional information you require.

Yours sincerely

Name of Investigator

Job Title of Investigator