

Making Complaints Work for Everyone

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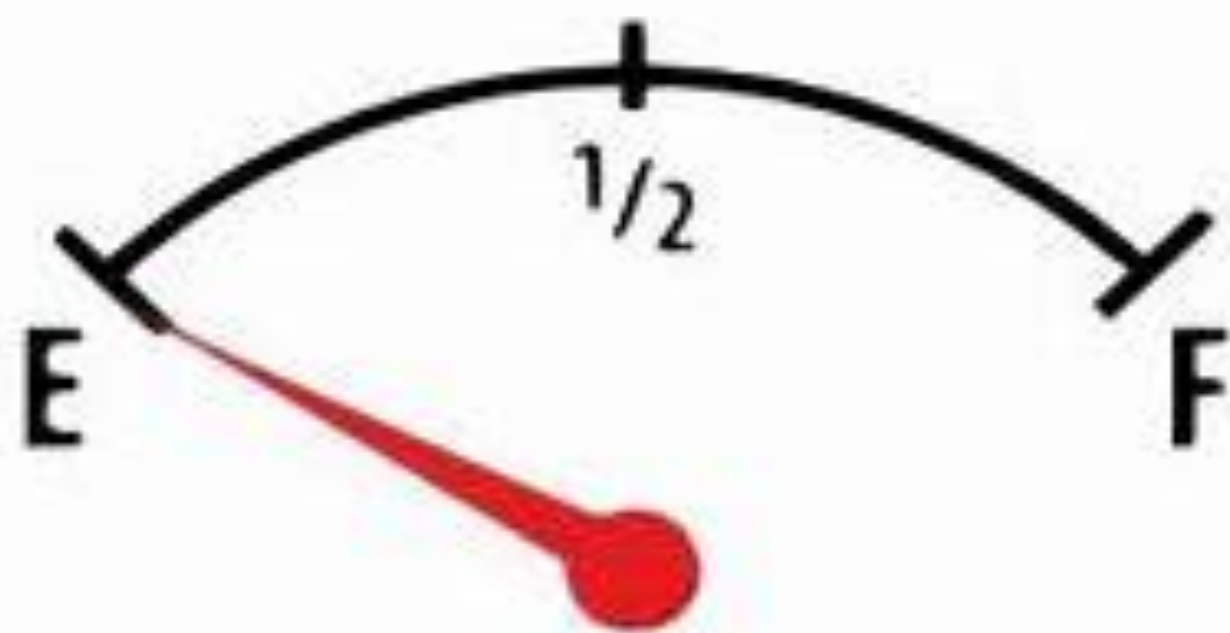
Learning and Improvement





Compassion

Fatigue





Making Complaints Work for Everyone
Learning from Complaints

December 2017

SPSO Scottish
Public
Services
Ombudsman

Complaint Handling Disincentives

- **adverse impact on staff well-being**
 - sickness, absence, staff turnover
- **adverse impact on future practice**
 - defensiveness
 - rationalisations
- **organisational impacts**
 - lost opportunity for learning
 - disproportionate use of resources
 - failure to make Reasonable Adjustments

Vicious Cycle



Virtuous Cycle



Solutions

- Reflect on your team culture. Do you promote a learning culture?
 - Share the learning
 - Proactively seek and use client feedback
 - Complaints Improvement Framework
- Support to make reasonable adjustments
- Unacceptable Actions Policy
 - Known, Understood & Used
- **How do we support staff when they are complained about?**



Scottish Research

- Mixed methods project investigating the impact of being complained about on local authority planning staff and housing association staff in Scotland
- Online survey and follow-up qualitative interviews
- Report published in December 2017 - *How do complaints affect those complained about? An empirical investigation into the effects of complaints on public service employees.*
- <https://administrativejusticeblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/effects-of-complaints-report-15-december-2017-final.pdf>

Key Findings

- 71% reported their work practice was negatively affected by a complaint,
- 67% reported their health and well-being was affected
- 61% reported their attitude to service users being affected
- Impact included emotional trauma, loss of confidence, double checking work, avoiding certain tasks, and being more cautious and distrustful of service users

Key Messages from the Research

- Negative effects of complaints are exacerbated by poor complaint handling e.g. not being kept informed and not being involved in the complaint
- When asked about improvements, people who have been complained about mostly emphasise the need for complaints process to be fair

Being Complained About – Good Practice Guidelines

- Funding from the University of Glasgow to translate the findings of this research project into practical resources
- Produced three associated documents for consultation:
 - Good Practice Principles and Guidelines – The Background
 - Being Complained About – Good Practice Guidelines (copy available today)
 - Good Practice Guidelines – Accompanying Notes

So, how can we make this work?

In your Groups look at the following sections of the 'Being Complained About Good Practice Guidelines'

Group A - Sections 4 and 5

Group B - Sections 6 and 7

Group C - Sections 8 and 9

Are these clear and appropriate ?

How could they be improved?