

# Family Doctors Association

## Merseyside

Risk Management 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009  
Complaints Workshop – Dr Simon Abrams

### Basic Principles

1. Acknowledge (in writing)
2. Discuss (see the guide below)
3. Investigate (do this thoughtfully, not looking for blame)
4. Respond (sincerely, compassionately)
5. Document (Keep a file of all correspondence and notes)

### A Guide to Better Customer Care Listening, Responding, Improving

From the DH Website, Published: 26 February 2009

1. Ask the person how they would like to be addressed – as Mr, Mrs, Ms or by their first name.
2. If someone has phoned you, offer to call them back and give them the chance to meet face to face to discuss the issue.
3. Ask them how they wish to be kept informed about how their complaint is being dealt with – by phone, letter, email or through a third party such as an advocacy or support service. If they say by phone, ask them for times when it is convenient to call and check that they are happy for messages to be left on their answer phone. If they say by post, make sure that they are happy to receive correspondence at the address given.
4. Check if the person has any disabilities or circumstances you need to take account of (for example, do they require wheelchair access, or are they on medication that can make them drowsy?).
5. Offer to meet the person at a location convenient to them.
6. Make the person aware that they can request an advocate to support them throughout the complaints process, including at the first meeting.
7. Systematically go through the reasons for the complaint with the person who is unhappy – it is important that you understand why they are dissatisfied. (See 'Assessing how serious the complaint is' on page 18 for how to assess an issue.)
8. Ask them what they would like to happen as a result of the complaint (for example, an apology, new appointment, reimbursement for costs or loss of personal belongings or an explanation). Tell them at the outset if their expectations are not feasible or realistic.

9. Agree a plan of action, including when and how the person complaining will hear back from your organisation. (See 'Responding in the right way every time' on page 22 for more information on developing a plan).
10. If you think you can resolve the matter quickly without further investigation do so as long as the person complaining is happy with that and there is no risk to other service users.
11. For any complaint, remember to: check if consent is needed to access someone's personal records, and let the complainant know the name and contact details of the manager who will investigate their complaint.