



Abercorn Clinic Complaints Policy

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Policy Owner/ Author:	Stephanie McQuillan

1. Purpose of Policy

Abercorn Clinic is committed to providing high-quality care to all our clients. We value your feedback and aim to resolve any concerns promptly and fairly. This policy outlines the process for making a complaint about our services.

2. Policy Statement

Abercorn Clinic is committed to providing high quality services whilst working in a fair, accessible, open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all its stakeholders. One of the ways in which it can continue to improve its services is by listening and responding to the views of its clients; staff; parents and carers; professional associates; and members of the public. Abercorn Clinic views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right.

The Clinic aims to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- it treats a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction;
- it deals with all complaints seriously and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- it ensures that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- it learns from complaints and uses them to improve its service(s).

It is recognised that many concerns will be raised informally. Abercorn Clinic aims to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;

- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and any individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure will be followed.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, and any other individuals acting on behalf of Abercorn Clinic.

Complaints can be made in writing (letter, email), verbally (in person or by phone), or anonymously.

- **In writing:** Address your complaint to the Practice Manager at Abercorn Clinic or contact@abercorn.org.uk
- **Verbally:** You can speak to a member of staff at the clinic or request a meeting with the Practice Manager.
- **Anonymously:** You can use our anonymous suggestion box located at Reception.

We encourage you to include as much detail as possible in your complaint, such as:

- The date(s) of the incident(s) you are complaining about
- The names of any staff members involved (if known)
- A clear description of your concerns
- Any desired outcome

4. Definitions

A complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with Abercorn Clinic's staff or service(s), no matter how expressed and whether justified or not, that requires a response or further action on the part of the Clinic. A complaint may be resolved informally.

If the matter is work-related and deemed more serious, then a formal grievance should be raised using the Grievance policy and procedure.

Where wrongdoing at work affects others, eg, affecting the general public (legally known as "making a disclosure in the public interest"), then the Whistle-blowing policy and procedure should be followed.

5. Procedure

There are 3 stages to the Complaints procedure:

- (i) Stage One – Complaint
- (ii) Stage Two – Investigation
- (iii) Stage Three – Appeal

- (i) Stage One - Complaint

Informal complaints are usually difficulties that can be dealt with by an individual member

of staff or manager. Staff should try to resolve the issue without escalation to a formal complaint, although it is recognised that not all complaints can be dealt with informally and if the matter is of a more serious nature, then the complaint will be treated as a formal complaint.

A formal complaint should be made in writing, addressed to the relevant Service Manager. Children and young people wishing to make a complaint should be offered support by a member of staff who can assist them in writing the complaint.

If the child or young person does not wish to make the complaint directly to Abercorn Clinic they can make the complaint via their parent, social worker, Who Cares?, Childline, the children rights officer from their local authority, Care Inspectorate, or Education Scotland.

Any formal complaint should include the complainant's name and address; the nature and date of the complaint; and how they wish to see it resolved. Complaints should be signed by the complainant.

If the complainant is unsure who to contact, they can write / email to:

Head of Support Services
Abercorn Clinic
11 Fairbairn Road
Livingston
EH54 6TS
hr@abercorn.org.uk

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 14 working days of receipt. The Head of Support Services will liaise with other relevant Senior Manager(s) and an investigating officer will be appointed.

(ii) Stage Two - Investigation

All complaints at this stage will be fully investigated, with a recommendation report provided to the Head of Support Services and / or relevant Senior Manager. A written response will be provided to the complainant within 10 working days by the Head of Support Services / relevant Senior Manager, and will contain details of the recommendation(s) made, such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training, or appropriate improvement to the Clinic's services.

Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case, a holding letter will be sent after 10 working days to the complainant which will contain a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can appeal within 7 working days of the date of the outcome, and progress to Stage Three. Appeals from Stage Two should be made to the Head of Support Services, contact details as above, who will initiate the Appeal process.

(iii) Stage Three - Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage Two, the complainant may appeal to the Managing Director, whom will review the appeal grounds and provide the claimant in writing with the outcome of Stage Three within 10 working days. The decision reached about the complaint will then be final.

Further Options

If you remain dissatisfied after the review, you can pursue your complaint further with:

- The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO): <https://www.spsso.org.uk/>
- The Health Improvement Scotland (HIS):
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_Improvement_Scotland

6. Responsibilities

Clinic Manager/Director:

- Overseeing the entire complaints process.
- Ensuring the policy is clear, accessible, and in compliance with relevant regulations.
- Appointing investigators and overseeing investigations.
- Communicating with the complainant throughout the process.
- Implementing any agreed-upon resolutions.
- Reviewing the complaints procedure regularly and making necessary adjustments.

Therapist/Clinician:

- Addressing client concerns promptly and professionally.
- Following the clinic's complaints procedure.
- Cooperating fully with the investigation process.
- Learning from complaints to improve their practice.

Investigator:

- Conducting a fair and impartial investigation.
- Gathering evidence and interviewing relevant parties.
- Documenting the investigation thoroughly.
- Preparing a report with findings and recommendations.

Reception/Administrative Staff:

- Providing information about the complaints procedure to clients.
- Accepting and logging complaints.
- Assisting with the administrative aspects of the complaints process.

7. Enforcement / Compliance

We will treat all complaints confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

This policy complies with relevant legislation in Scotland, including the Patients' Rights Act (Scotland) 2002.