

Introduction

The key features of an effective complaint handling system can be organised according to 10 principles for good practice. These principles form the three stages of complaint handling:

- Enables complaints to be made - a customer focused system, that is visible and accessible, with a demonstrated commitment from the organisation's management;
- Responds promptly and effectively to complaints - complaints are handled objectively and fairly with appropriate confidentiality, remedies are provided where complaints are upheld and there is a system for review for finalised complaints; and
- Provides for accountability and learning - there are clearly established accountabilities for complaint handling and continuous improvement opportunities are identified and implemented, as appropriate

Source: <http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/-guidelines/The-principles-of-effective-complaint-handling.pdf>

The principles of effective complaint handling

- 1. Customer focus** – the organisation is committed to effective complaints handling and values feedback through complaints.
- 2. Visibility** – information about how and where to complain is well publicised to customers, staff and other interested parties.
- 3. Accessibility** – the process for making a complaint and investigating it is easy for complainants to access and understand.
- 4. Responsiveness** – complaints are acknowledged promptly, addressed according to urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.
- 5. Objectivity and fairness** – complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. This will help ensure that the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable. Unreasonable complainants are not allowed to become a burden.
- 6. Confidentiality** – personal information related to complaints is kept confidential.
- 7. Remedy** – if a complaint is upheld, the organisation provides a remedy.
- 8. Review** – there are opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the organisation's response to the complaint, and complainants are informed about these avenues.
- 9. Accountability** – accountabilities for complaint handling are clearly established, and complaints and responses to them are monitored and reported to management and other stakeholders.
- 10. Continuous Improvement** – complaints are a source of improvement for organisations.

The Principles of Effective Complaint Handling

