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# Complaint handling policy

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# Complaint handling policy

## NOTE:

This policy excludes specific details for the complaint processes relating to **Independent Contractors** providing services to patients / clients from Eton Place rooms.

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# Policy statement

Eton Place is committed to continually improving the services we provide by welcoming feedback from customers and our community. We want to ensure that any person or organisation using our services, has the right to lodge a complaint.

We value your feedback and commit to resolving issues quickly, fairly, efficiently and with courtesy. Your rights to confidentiality, access, equity, and transparency shall be maintained throughout the complaints handling process.

The intent of this policy is to communicate and document a complaints and appeals management process that:

- provides a means for receiving complaints or feedback
- encourages the reporting of workplace complaints and issues
- is easily accessed and practical
- is understood by our patients/clients and other stakeholders
- meets the requirements of our business in alignment with our services
- provides for a fair, equitable and timely response
- is in compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

## Independent Contractors

***Many doctors and clinicians working out of the rooms at Eton Place are Independent Contractors they deliver their services from Eton Place with complete sovereignty. They provide their services from the rooms at Eton Place to their own patients for their own businesses. The independent contractors may have their own complaints policy and procedures. Complaints regarding independent contractors do not fall under this policy. Complaints pertaining to an Independent contractor will be accepted on the behalf of the Independent contractor. Any and all written complaints regarding independent contractors will be forwarded accordingly.***

## Definitions

**Complaint:** an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about your business regarding your staff, services that warrants response or resolution

**Complainant:** the person or entity that makes a complaint

**Escalation:** the process of referring complaints to other persons for additional management action

## Principles

The following principles shall guide our organisation and commitment for managing customer complaints. We shall:

- accept all complaints from patients/clients, suppliers, other stakeholders and members of our community in writing
- recognise the importance of complaints that are submitted to us
- ensure confidentiality of all parties is maintained throughout the process
- provide support to employee complainants
- commit to the resolution of complaints that satisfies all parties

- endeavour to manage complaints within a timely manner
- maintain communications with all parties during the process
- provide employees with training on this policy and procedure
- provide awareness on escalation options if required
- ensure complainants are not disadvantaged by submitting a complaint under this process
- ensure management reviews include complaints data to identify improvement opportunities
- continually monitor and improve the complaints management system.

## Process

### Information for patients / clients

Eton Place complaints process will be documented for patients/clients in a publicly available document on our website, when providing our services and upon request.

All patients/clients will be informed of our complaints management process as required.

We shall advise potential complainants:

- how to submit a complaint
- who the contact person is at Eton Place
- how we will deal with the complaint
- how we will advise the outcome of the complaint.

### Training procedures

Employees shall receive training on complaints management processes during their induction, and as part of ongoing training.

Managers will undergo training for complaints management and resolution to support customers and others through the complaint process and appropriately respond to complaints in an empathetic manner.

### Making a complaint

We accept complaints in writing

- the employee they were dealing with at the time
- a manager or supervisor of that employee
- the practice principal
- a Director, or
- an external body such as the Health Ombudsman

Complaints may be made by:

- sending written complaints to [reception@etonplace.com.au](mailto:reception@etonplace.com.au) or Eton Place, 2 Eton Street Toowong QLD 4066
- A manager will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

If the complaint is about an employee, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the practice manager or the practice principal.

## Process for complaints management

Where an employee is provided a complaint, they are responsible for:

### 1. **Receiving the complaint** by:

- listening to the complainant, acknowledging the concern, and advising of our complaint's management process
- depending on the type and severity of the complaint, either discussing with the complainant an agreed upon resolution (for smaller matters) or referring the complaint on to a manager for further investigation and action.

The complaint manager is responsible for all further steps where a complaint cannot be resolved at step 1. They are responsible for:

### 2. **Processing the complaint** by:

- updating the complaints register
- communicating with the complainant.

### 3. **Investigating the complaint** by:

- examining information relevant to the complaint
- investigating the complaint and determining a response
- communicating with the complainant on the determination and outcome of the complaint and next steps for resolution.
- resolving the complaint in a timely manner and, if delays occur, advising the complainant accordingly.

### 4. **Responding to and resolving the complaint** by:

- deciding or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 7 days of the complaint being received
- informing the complainant of the outcome and the reasons for any decisions made (and if so, what will be done to resolve it)
- resolving the complaint (and how this has been achieved); or if no further action can be taken, the reasons for this
- informing the complainant of any options for further action if required
- if an apology is in order, ensuring that the appropriate person makes the apology and informs the complainant what the organisation intends to do to avoid further grievance.

### 5. **Reviewing the complaint.**

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal, they can seek a further review of the matter by the practice principal.

### 6. **Referring the complaint to an external procedure.**

- If after the practice principal has reviewed the complaint and the complainant is still not satisfied, they may escalate the complaint to an external body.

## Complaints involving specific staff members

The practice manager and practice principal has delegated responsibility for resolving complaints or disputes involving staff members.

Internal complaints, where a staff member makes a complaint concerning another staff member, will be dealt with in accordance with the Eton Place Managing Grievances Policy.

External complaints by patients/clients or stakeholders made against a staff member will be managed by the practice manager and practice principal who will:

- notify the staff member of the complaint and its nature
- investigate the complaint and interview persons involved
- mediate the matter as necessary to reach an agreed resolution
- take other appropriate action as they see necessary.

Any disciplinary action against a staff member arising from a complaint will be taken in accordance with the procedures contained in Eton Place's disciplinary procedures.

## Cooperation in external investigations

If any person makes a complaint about Eton Place to an external body (including police, Ombudsman, Office of Fair Trading or Administrative Appeals Tribunal), **AND THE COMPLAINT DOES NOT PERTAIN TO AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR** the practice principal / practice manager shall be responsible for liaising with the body responsible for investigating the issue.

Eton Place will fully cooperate in any investigation which may take place. This includes participating in early resolution, conciliation, and/or reporting to the body about resolution and corrective actions if required.

## Record keeping

An electronic complaints register shall be maintained by the business and kept for a minimum of 7 years after the complaint has been made. The register will be maintained within our records management system and will record the following for each complaint or appeal:

- name and contact details of the complainant
- details of the complaint
- actions taken
- date submitted and date closed.

All correspondence shall be maintained in our records management system. Information shall be treated as confidential and access restricted.

## Continuous improvement of the complaints management system

The complaints management policy and process shall be reviewed and evaluated every year when management conducts its annual review of our quality system. This will include:

- review of the Complaints Management System
- corrective actions and improvement opportunities identified to improve the system
- forward plans to ensure continual improvement.

## Grievance Forms

Forms can be found on the Eton Place website [www.etonplace.com.au](http://www.etonplace.com.au) or hardcopies can be requested at reception.