

FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## MEC FOREWORD

The department is committed to serving our people in a caring, dignified and respectful manner.

To strengthen the quality of our services and promote active participation of citizens in the delivery of health services as well as ensure compliance with the National Health Act, we have developed a policy for the management of compliments and complaints across the facilities of the department.

This policy realizes Batho Pele Principles as a government initiative to get public servants to be service oriented, to strive for excellence in service delivery and allow customers to hold public servants accountable for the type of services they deliver.

I encourage our staff to be receptive to service users needs and suggestions as the feedback provided will go a long way towards ensuring health for a better life.

To resolve complaints promptly, service point managers must as far as possible seek to resolve the complaints as they are lodged.

We urge our customers to contribute to this service delivery improvement drive by giving us both negative and positive feedback about our services as this will ensure our staff know areas of weaknesses and strengths to be able to adjust our activities to meet and exceed the users expectations.

.....

Mr. ST Belot

MEC Health

Date .....

## **1. HOD STATEMENT**

The National Health Act requires the Department to have an approved complaint management policy and procedures for the department in the quest to ensure a dignified and just environment for health care service delivery.

The department has developed the said policy and regards service users compliments and complaints as part of an essential oversight role because they provide an opportunity to redress, increase user satisfaction, and improve processes, systems, and outcomes.

Although the department is trying its best to make sure that all service users are treated properly and promptly, sometimes the expectations are not met.

It is for this reason that Chief Executive Officers and Facility Managers have to ensure serious consideration is given to users experiences to an extent of designating one of their well experienced staff members as Customer Care Co ordinator to deal with compliments and complaints.

The Department remain committed to providing the highest quality care and treatment for our service users whilst respecting their dignity and individuality.

The department will continue to review its services to ensure that services are a true reflection of customer's expectations and needs.

The reporting and monitoring mechanisms has to provide for lessons to be learnt, complaints to be followed up constructively, as well as services adaptation where indicated

.....  
Professor P.L. Ramela  
HOD Health

Date .....

## **2. PURPOSE**

To provide procedures for handling complaints and compliments that is transparent, fair and impartial to both internal and external customers.

## **3. SCOPE**

This policy and procedure manual shall be applicable to all facilities under the control of FSDOH.

## **4. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **4.1 Complaint**

A complaint is defined as the dissatisfaction expressed by the service users can be lodged verbally , telephonically, e-mail or in writing by any person about our health services

### **4.2 Complainant**

- A primary service user
- Visitor or escort
- Someone on behalf of current or former service user who due to some circumstance is incapable register the complaint.
- Any appropriate person in respect of a patient who has died, e.g. next of kin or their agent.

### **4.3 Service Users**

Are individuals having an interest in the services that are rendered by the department/institution.

### **4.4 Compliment**

A note of appreciation for the service rendered by the staff in the facility

### **4.5 Service Providers**

Employees of the department/within the institution.

## **5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele, 1997)
- 5.2 Patient's Right Charter 2000
- 5.3 Constitution of Republic of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996)
- 5.4 Health Act (Act no. 61 of 2003)
- 5.5 Code of conduct for public Service
- 5.6 Access to Information Act (Act no. 2 of 2000)
- 5.7 Public Service Act, No. 103 of 1994 and its regulations as amended

## **6. PRINCIPLES**

### **6.1 Accessibility**

It must be made as easy as possible for users to complain. Users should be able to lodge a complaint in their home language and referred to get assistance if they cannot write.

### **6.2 Confidentiality**

The Complaint should be handled in a private environment providing for dignity and in a non judgemental manner.

Monthly Reporting should highlight nature, type, file number and demographics not necessarily names and other personal data

### **6.3 Cost effectiveness**

As far as possible complaints should be resolved at a unit level to prevent waste of time and possible litigation resulting in media hype and legal costs.

### **6.4 Impartiality**

Receipt and Investigation of complaints should focus at finding the truth based on standards to promote justice for both the user and the providers without prejudice.

### **6.5 Responsiveness**

The complaints should be handled within stipulated time frames and referred to the next level if unresolved

## **7. COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**

### **SERVICE STANDARD :**

**All institutions and its units should in their access areas have the Complaint and Compliments Procedure, Batho Pele Principles and Patient Rights Charter prominently displayed**

#### **FLOW CHART FOR MANAGING A COMPLAINT**

A user registers a complaint with the service point head



The service head acknowledges the complaints and attempts to resolve it on the spot



If unresolved on the spot the complaint is put in writing and referred to the Customer Care Co –Ordinator who will attempt to resolve it within 10 working days



If still unresolved then it is referred to the Chief Executive Officer or Facility Manager who will institute further investigation and provide final institutional response within further 10 days



**The complaint is referred to the Service Marketing Sub Directorate Telephone 0800 535554 for FSDOH response**



**In an unlikely event that the complaint remain unresolved the complaint can be referred to the Office of the Ombudsman 083 5549078**

## **7.1 REPORTING PROCEDURES**

All complaint received by the service units should be reported to the Customer Care Co ordinator monthly with the progress status reflected

The Customer Care Cordinator shall then compile an institutional report by the seventh each month and submit the report to the C.E.O. and Service Marketing Sub Directorate

### **⇒ Customer Guide: Complaints**

Customers can complain verbally, telephonically or in writing to the immediate service provider or directly report to the Customer Care Co Ordinator

## **8. CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS**

Complaints are categorized into three:

- Clinical Care
- Management / Administration
- Staff

### **8.1 CATEGORY 1: CLINICAL CARE\***

Clinical processes are issues related to direct patient/client care. It covers the following:-

- Medical Diagnosis and Treatment
- Complications arising from nursing care
- Use and provision of assistive devices appliances
- Physical Harm to the patient

**\*Adverse Event reported through the MEC, office of the Ombudsman, HOD , Executive Management will be managed by the Service Marketing Sub Directorate for impartiality sake , and feedback given to the referring Manager , affected facilities and the complainant**



## **8.2 CATEGORY 2: MANAGEMENT / ADMINISTRATION**

This includes operational management of all processes involved in the delivery of a quality service and administrative issues such as:-

- Supplies Shortages
- Safety and security.
- User-friendly service.
- Theft/ Fraud
- Food Services
- Hygiene and Cleanliness

## **8.3 CATEGORY 3: STAFF**

This involves areas pertaining to the manner in which patients/clients are received and cared for at the health facilities: -

- Denied Access
- Attitudes of staff & Behavior
- Right to choose

## **9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPLAINANTS**

- The complainant will be expected to fill in a complaint form.
- A complaint to expect acknowledgement within three working days of submitting the complain.
- Follow up on the outcome of the investigation .
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome he/she is free to contact the provincial Customer Relation Officer at this toll free number **0800 53 5554**.

## **10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACILITIES**

**All facilities (hospitals and clinics) should keep a complaint register at the Customer Care Co Ordinators .Office**

1. The register should be analyzed monthly , for interpretation of pattern and trends and continuous improvement of problem areas.
2. Complaints and Compliments should be discussed at management meetings and used as a management tool to improve health service delivery.
3. Complaints and Compliments procedure to be displayed in all institutional entry and exit points with the contact details of the customer care relation officer.
4. Complaints/suggestion boxes to be put strategically in areas that will be easily observable and accessible to clients.

## **11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXECUTIVE OFFICES**

The complaints received through the office of the MEC, , HOD ,Executive Managers, Media should be referred to Service Marketing Sub-Directorate for management and capturing in the database

## **12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORPORATE OFFICE- SERVICE MARKETING SUB DIRECTORATE**

- Training on documentation, confidentiality and interpretation of complaints and compliments will be provided to personnel managing the register.
- The electronic complaints database will be managed from head office and will also encapsulate complaints referred or directly received there.
- The Customer Care Centre/ Call Centre situated within the Services Marketing & Health Promotion Sub Directorate will manage the database.
- All complaints captured at call center should be entered into this database and be referred immediately to the affected facility for acknowledgment and management.
- All complaint received by call center administrator shall be rerouted to the C.E.O , Facility Manager.
- The progress report on all complaints/concerns referred must be reported back within 10working days to call centre to update the provincial database.
- Number and nature of complaints should be discussed at Provincial Top Management and Quarterly Review Meetings

<b>ADDENDUM A</b>
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**FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**(To be completed by the Complainant or Customer Care Co-Ordinators)**

**COMPLAINT FORM**

**Reference No.:** .....

**Gender:**.....

**Race:**.....

**Age:**.....

Please tick appropriate response

Type of complaint:

Verbal	
Written	

Name of institution:

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Name of patient:

--

Address :


File number of patient and date of admission:

--

Telephone:

Work		Home	
------	--	------	--

Name of complainant: if different from the patient

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**COMPLAINT DETAILS :**


**EXPECTED OUTCOME**


## CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT

Mark with an X

I	2	3
---	---	---

Date reported/received:

--

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Customer Care  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Referred for investigation to: (Note Name, Surname, Designation and contact details)

Name:	
Designation:	
Contact No.	

Name of investigating officers/officers at institutional level:

1.	
2.	
3.	

## OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION


	YES	NO	DATE
Resolved			
Referred			
Pending			

Brief summary of step taken/course of action/outcome of investigation


\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature- Customer Care Co –Ordinator

Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **ADDENDUM B**

### **COMPLAINT REGISTER**

**(Will be done electronically via a database to be created)**

#### **PURPOSE OF A REGISTER**

To record and monitor the number of complaints, their frequency, source and trends for the purpose of improving the quality of service delivery.

#### **REGISTER INFORMATION**

**The register should contain the following information electronically:**

- Record number
- Date compliment/ complaint was reported or received
- Name of complainant
- Name of patient/client
- Contact address or telephone
- Nature/ category of compliment/complaint
- Date incident happened
- Name and Surname of person receiving compliment/ complaint
- Gender of complainant
- Age of complainant
- Geographical area