

We at Via Vita Health Ltd believe that if a client or individual wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so. At Via Vita Health Ltd our policy is to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide a better service. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously. The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation.

We at Via Vita Health Ltd believe that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, client dissatisfaction and possible litigation. Via Vita Health Ltd supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out between just the complainant and Via Vita Health Ltd.

Aim:

The aim of Via Vita Health is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that complainants feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

Goals:

- Clients and their representatives are aware of how to complain, and that Via Vita Health Ltd provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within two working days
- Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days
- All complaints are responded to in writing by Via Vita Health Ltd
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both Via Vita Health Ltd and their clients

The named person, with responsibility for dealing with complaints, is Caroline Sidell.

Complaints Procedure Oral Complaints

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- Via Vita Health employees who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to refer the matter to the complaints manager to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.

- Via Vita Health Employees should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other employees.
- If the complaint is being made on behalf of the client by an advocate, it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the client, especially if confidential information is involved. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the customer when they may not. If in doubt it should be assumed that the client's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, each manager or the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable, then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i.e. through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant, then the member of staff or manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to Via Vita Health and give them a copy of the complaints procedure and form for completion.
- In both cases details of the complaint should be recorded on a complaint form.

Written Complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the named complaints manager, who should record it in the complaints book and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days. The complaints manager will be the named person who deals with the complaint through the process (Caroline Sidell).
 - If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the client but on the client's behalf, then consent of the client, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the client.
 - A copy of the complaint's procedure will be given to the client.
 - All complaints should be adjudicated by an impartial person.
 - If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Via Vita Health Ltd under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.
 - Immediately on receipt of the complaint Via Vita Health Ltd should launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
 - If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
 - If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
 - At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened, need not be an admission of liability).
 - Such a meeting gives Via Vita Health Ltd the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
 - After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.

- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded on appropriate documentation and any shortcomings in Via Vita Health's procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- Via Vita Health's complaints procedure should be audited by the manager every six months.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint you have the right to escalate the complaints.

Further information about your rights and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can be found below.

Citizens Advice:

Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer>

Financial Ombudsman Service:

Website: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Training

Caroline Sidell is responsible for organising and co-ordination of training. All staff should be trained in dealing with, and responding to, complaints. Complaints policy training should be included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on handling complaints, should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

NEXT REVIEW DATE : May 2019