

Professional Training in Complaints Handling and Investigations

A range of one-day courses and a nationally recognised qualification equipping staff with the essential skills and knowledge to undertake complaints investigations to best practice standards.



**BOND
SOLON**



A Wilmington Company



“There is little evidence that the costs of failing to get things right first time are fully understood and quantified by public bodies. Instead the focus tends to be on budgets rather than costs.”

**Right First Time (2011),
Administrative Justice and
Tribunals Council**

“An extremely informative three days, which left us feeling fully equipped with a new range of skills to assist in complaint resolution, investigations and interview techniques. The course was presented in an interesting way and lively discussions were encouraged. Even those members who had been handling complaints for many years got a great deal from this course. I would highly recommend Bond Solon as a helpful, friendly and professional company that listens and responds to what its customers need.”

**Julie Cartwright,
Patient Advice & Complaints
Manager for the cluster of NHS
Devon, Plymouth and Torbay**

Why undertake Complaints Handling and Investigation training?

For any organisation it is essential that the handling of a complaint and any subsequent investigation, findings and recommendations are carried out professionally and to best practice standards. Often personnel tasked with undertaking a complaints investigation on behalf of their organisation have had little or no formal recognised training in this area.

Failure to respond to a complaint properly and justify decisions can have considerable consequences for an organisation including adverse media attention, additional costs and the complaint being escalated to the ombudsman. Conversely, a proactive and well structured complaints process increases the likelihood of early resolution and can generate a lot of good will and loyalty toward an organisation.

Bond Solon has designed a range of intense one-day training courses that will provide delegates with the essential knowledge and skills to conduct a complaints investigation to best practice standards. Delegates will learn how to professionally carry out a thorough investigation, establish facts and secure relevant, reliable and credible information to promote early resolution.

Areas of training include:

- Law, Evidence & Procedure in Complaints Handling and Investigation
- Questioning and Interview Techniques in Complaints
- Responding to Complaints - Letter and Report Writing

Professional Training in Complaints Handling and Investigations will:

- equip delegates with the necessary skills, knowledge and procedures to carry out a complaints investigation to best practice standards
- reduce the risk of complaints investigations not meeting the required standards
- instil confidence in those tasked to undertake investigations
- reduce costs and create a standardised approach to handling and investigating complaints across your organisation
- help promote early resolution of complaints
- provide a structured development path for all investigators, giving them the necessary competencies to carry out their work effectively and to best practice standards



Can the training lead to a recognised qualification?

Yes. Professional Training in Complaints Handling and Investigations is made up of a number of one-day courses. These courses can be attended as stand-alone training or together over a period of time leading to a nationally recognised BTEC qualification awarded by Edexcel.

Delegates that undertake the three days of training, and successfully complete the post course assessments, will be eligible for the **Professional Award in Complaints Handling and Investigation**, BTEC Level 5, accredited by awarding body Edexcel.

Who should attend the training?

These courses have been successfully delivered across the UK to a wide variety of public bodies including central and local government departments, ombudsman and the NHS.

The courses are suitable for any personnel who may be tasked to undertake a complaints investigation including:

- Complaints Investigators, Officers & Caseworkers
- Managers and other personnel tasked with undertaking complaints investigations as part of their wider role
- Personnel working in a complaints handling capacity for ombudsmen schemes and other dedicated complaints handling bodies
- Adjudicators

Public and in-house courses

Public courses are run in central London. If you have 5 or more colleagues we can come to you and deliver the training in-house at your organisation.

A unique approach in both the design and delivery of your training needs

Bond Solon will work closely with key personnel to ensure the training is tailored to your organisations specific needs incorporating your Complaints Policies and Procedures.

As a dedicated training company, Bond Solon is fully aware that delegates require a range of learning styles on each course to ensure everyone acquires the necessary knowledge and skills. The training we deliver is interactive and the delegates will learn by doing and receive feedback and support from their peers and trainers. Case studies are based on real practical examples with the learning focusing on delegate participation.

“Our experience tells us that complaints that start badly often escalate, placing unnecessary demands on the council and the complainant.”

**Guidance on Running a Complaints System (2009),
Local Government Ombudsman**

“Quality of care is not just about getting the treatment and care of patients right. It is also about putting things right when mistakes occur. This means handling complaints promptly and sensitively, and carrying out thorough investigations to establish the facts of the case. It also means giving complainants timely and evidence-based responses, ensuring that any failings in care are properly acknowledged and explained.”

**Listening and Learning (2012),
The Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman**



Law, Evidence & Procedure in Complaints Handling and Investigation (1 day)

The way information and evidence is gathered has a major impact on successful complaints handling, response and resolution. If done correctly, the investigation should help establish the root cause of the complaint and the appropriate way to handle it.

This one-day course is designed to give delegates the knowledge, skills and techniques to carry out a complaints investigation to best practice standards.

The course will cover the whole process of planning a complaints investigation and collecting, recording, assessing and evaluating evidence/documentation.

Delegates will learn how to conduct a fair and objective investigation to establish the facts in the case; in doing so enabling them to support their findings and justify their subsequent actions, decisions and recommendations.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Understanding relevant policies, procedures, guidance and legislation (if applicable)
- Planning and conducting a fair and proportionate complaints investigation
- Recognising different types of evidence, including, oral, documentary, hearsay, circumstantial and real
- Distinguishing between facts, inferences and opinions
- How to research, collect, record and evaluate evidence and documentation from a wide variety of sources to determine the root cause of the complaint and/or reach justifiable conclusions or decisions
- Creating, maintaining and enhancing best practice standards in record keeping

“When things go wrong, good complaint handling will help restore high-quality, patient-centred care. To achieve this, high standards of complaint handling need to be part of the new landscape...”

**Listening and Learning (2012),
The Parliamentary and Health
Ombudsman**

“The training raised my understanding of the Complaints procedure. The trainer’s knowledge was excellent. I felt able to approach him and ask extra questions to support my understanding. A really well organised day.”

**Shirley James,
Programmes Manager,
Gloucester Probation Trust**



Questioning and Interview Techniques in Complaints (1 day)

Personnel tasked with conducting a complaints investigation will often need to question a variety of people, including the complainant, a range of witnesses and those who are subject to the complaint. These interviews will either be conducted face to face or over the telephone.

It is essential that these personnel have the requisite competencies to be able to undertake this role to best practice standards, enabling them to obtain key information to effectively deal with a complaint.

During this one-day course delegates will learn how to identify the issues around the complaint and effectively plan and structure appropriate interviews. They will consider a range of questioning techniques available to them, including the PEACE Model (Planning, Preparation, Engage and Explain, Account and Evaluation). Delegates will also learn how to appropriately and sensitivity handle witnesses who maybe angry, upset and confused.

Through role-play and trainer led constructive feedback this course will instil the fundamental principles and develop the delegates to carry out effective questioning and fact finding interviews.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Identifying the key issues in the complaint and the existing facts or evidence available before conducting an interview
- How to plan and prepare a fact finding interview both face to face and over the telephone
- Understanding and using different questioning techniques to establish the facts and to obtain all the available evidence
- How to conduct interviews by applying the PEACE (planning, preparation, engage and explain, account, closure and evaluation) model and consider other interviewing models
- How to structure objective interviews in a manner that is appropriate to the type of interview and interviewee

“The Bond Solon training was excellent. The trainer created a safe, encouraging and interactive environment which enabled us to enhance existing knowledge.

Particularly useful were the opportunities to review real cases and get constructive feedback from the trainer. I will have no hesitation to recommend Bond Solon to anyone who should ask in the future.”

**Christine Webb,
Modern Matron,
Older Peoples Mental Health,
Rotherham Doncaster & South
Humber NHS Foundation Trust**



Responding to Complaints – Letter and Report Writing (1 day)

“I personally found the training to be excellent - informative, interesting and very relevant. The trainers had an approachable style, moving things along at just the right pace, and making sure that everyone had a chance to participate. Even though I have a lot of experience dealing with complaints, I learnt so much over three worthwhile training days and I would recommend Bond Solon to any organisation that values and acts on customer feedback.”

**Alistair Cook,
Head of Office,
Judicial Appointments and
Conduct Ombudsman**

“Bond Solon worked very effectively with us from start to finish, holding detailed discussions to find out more about our specific training needs, then designed a customised training programme that covered all of the required elements within a holistic framework. In terms of the course delivery, this was excellent, informative, current and engaging. The facilitator was very professional, and it was clear that he had an in-depth knowledge of, and, experience in the subject matter.”

**Anita Craig,
Training Officer,
Police Ombudsman for Northern
Ireland**

Letters and reports produced during the course of a complaints investigation often fail to identify and deal with the core issues of the complaint, and also neglect to lay out a coherent and credible basis for the investigation's findings and recommendations.

A good letter and any subsequent report will provide an invaluable tool for feeding back to both the complainant and the organisation. The report should provide sound recommendations of how to implement improvements to the risk assessment process and working practices of the organisation.

During this one-day course delegates will learn how to improve the content, structure and style of the letters and reports they produce through adopting best practice standards.

By reference to a model letter and report formats and use of objective assessment criteria to assess their letter and reports delegates will perfect the quality of the written documentation they produce.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- How to include documentary, witness, interview and other evidence in letters and reports
- Identifying issues, facts and the source and weight of those facts and including them in the response
- Appropriate layout, format and style in letters and reports
- Setting out the findings and analysis for each point of the complaint in the letter and report
- How to write with clarity, objectivity and purpose
- Developing an objective and critical eye in relation to complaint letter and report writing



A selection of our clients...

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Air Accident Investigation Branch, BIS, Civil Aviation Authority, Environment Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, DSTL, Gambling Commission, Health Protection Agency, HMRC, Home Office, Information Commissioner's Office, Insolvency Service, Maritime & Coastguard Agency, Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, MOD, Office of Fair Trading, Office of Rail Regulation, Ofgem, Ofsted, Ofwat, Pensions Regulator, Rural Payments Agency, Serious Fraud Office, SOCA, Solicitors Regulation Authority

OMBUDSMAN SCHEMES

Housing Ombudsman Service, Judicial Appointments & Conduct Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Office for Judicial Complaints, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, Pensions Ombudsman, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Property Ombudsman, Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, Scottish Legal Complaints Commission, Scottish Public Service Ombudsman

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Basildon & Thurrock General Hospitals NHS Trust, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Bexley Care Trust, NHS Bury, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, NHS Devon, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, NHS Portsmouth, Powys Teaching Health Board, RDaSH NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, South Central Ambulance Service, Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

About Bond Solon

Bond Solon is the UK's leading legal training organisation for non-lawyers. Over the past 20 years over 250,000 delegates have attended our training programmes. We work with a broad range of public and commercial organisations helping them to ensure that personnel are able to work to best practice standards with confidence and that they are aware of the legal framework in which they operate. Bond Solon delivers training throughout the UK and worldwide.

Over the past 10 years we have successfully delivered Complaints Handling and Investigations Training across the UK to a wide variety of public bodies including central and local government departments, ombudsman and the NHS.

Recognised Supplier of the Government Procurement Service

Bond Solon is a recognised supplier of the Government Procurement Service. An executive agency of the Cabinet Office, the Government Procurement Service was created to provide procurement savings for the UK Public Sector. It also delivers centralised procurement (including expert sourcing, category and centralised data management) for Central Government Departments.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aberdeenshire, Birmingham, Blaenau Gwent, Bournemouth, Brent, Buckinghamshire, Camden, Cardiff, Chelsea & Kensington, Chiltern, City of London, Conwy, Denbighshire, Devon, East Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Enfield, Glasgow, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hampshire, Hillingdon, Kirklees, Leicester, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Newcastle, Northumberland, Poole, Sheffield, Slough, South Lanarkshire, Southwark, Staffordshire, Swansea, Thanet, Torfaen, Tower Hamlets, Vale of Glamorgan, Westminster, York

FIRE BRIGADES

Avon, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon and Somerset, Dorset, East Sussex, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Merseyside, Mid & West Wales, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northern Ireland, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, South Yorkshire, South Wales, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Wiltshire

POLICE

Avon and Somerset, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Central Scotland, Cheshire, City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Greater Manchester, Guernsey, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, College of Policing, PSNI, National Crime Agency, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Mercia

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