

## Care Skillsbase: Skills Check 29

# Responding to Concerns and Complaints

### Interviewer's pack

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Summary	
<b>Suitable for</b>	Senior Care Worker
<b>Skill checked</b>	Spoken communication
<b>Covers</b>	Language and concepts associated with responding to concerns and complaints
<b>Learning for interviewer</b>	Can the member of staff discuss with understanding how to respond appropriately to concerns and complaints?
<b>Learning for member of staff</b>	How to respond appropriately to concerns and complaints
<b>Approx time needed</b>	Total: 30 minutes (15 minutes for Skills Check and 15 minutes feedback)
<b>How it works</b>	Offers information and asks questions about responding to concerns and complaints. Use discussion of person's answers to check the person's spoken communication skills.
<b>Notes</b>	Some reading required. The interviewer will need an up-to-date understanding of the organisation's complaints procedure. See Guidance for more information.
<b>Before you start</b>	Read the <b>general guidance</b> in the <b>Skills Check</b> area of the Skillsbase website.

**We welcome suggestions to improve this Skills Check. Please use the contact form on our website at [www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk](http://www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk)**

## Responding to Concerns and Complaints

### Guidance

**Item 1** in the Skills Check activity sets out the importance of creating a fair, open and honest culture that allows and encourages complaints to be voiced.

To check comprehension of this item, ask the person what point the passage is making.

**Item 2** focuses on practices and procedures in your workplace.

It asks the person to check their understanding of the organisation's complaints procedure with the interviewer. You will need an up-to-date understanding of complaints policy and practice in your organisation.

In general, good practice in social care in dealing with complaints includes:

- trying to resolve complaints at the earliest stage
- offering advocacy or support to the complainant where required
- ensuring the complainant is kept informed of progress
- giving a clear report of the outcome and information on what to do if the complainant is not satisfied
- ensuring staff are properly briefed on the complaints procedure
- ensuring people from seldom heard groups (e.g. people with dementia or people from minority groups) receive appropriate support to complain.

You may wish to use item 2 to draw the person's attention to how your own procedure achieves this.

# Understand the Job: Responding to Concerns and Complaints

Effective communication is vital in social care. Use this activity to learn more about the **communication skills** you will be using in your job.

First, write your name and today's date on the line below.

(First name)

(Last name)

(Date: Day-Month-Year)

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## 1. Did you know?

They say, 'No news is good news.' That doesn't apply to complaints, unfortunately.

Most of us find it quite difficult to complain. Reasons for this include:

- not knowing the right words to use (especially if English is not our first language or if we have a cognitive impairment)
- worrying that, if we complain, we will be seen as a troublemaker and be treated worse.

It is also very difficult to complain about someone who provides us with a face-to-face service on a daily basis, especially when we are complaining only about one aspect of their otherwise good work.

That is why we need to be fair, open and honest about complaints, so that

- people who use our services feel confident in bringing concerns to our attention
- we pick up problems at an early stage and address them
- vulnerable people, including anyone who finds it difficult to make their views heard, are protected and supported.

We can keep serious complaints to a minimum by making sure that the people who use our services feel free to raise concerns with frontline staff and that those staff respond promptly.

The secret is simple: treat concerns and complaints as a way to improve the service, not just a criticism.

## 2. This organisation's policy on complaints

As a senior care worker responsible for other staff, you have a central role to play in creating the fair, open and honest culture that our service users and staff deserve. Therefore, it is important that you feel confident about how to respond when a concern or complaint is brought to your attention.

Consider these questions:

- If you were asked what your organisation's policy on complaints was, what would you say?
- If you asked members of your team to describe the complaints policy, could they?
- If someone said they wanted to read the policy, would you know where to find it?
- If someone asked you if the policy was clear and easy to understand, what would you say?
- How well do you think the policy works in practice?

## Understand the Job: Responding to Concerns and Complaints (continued)

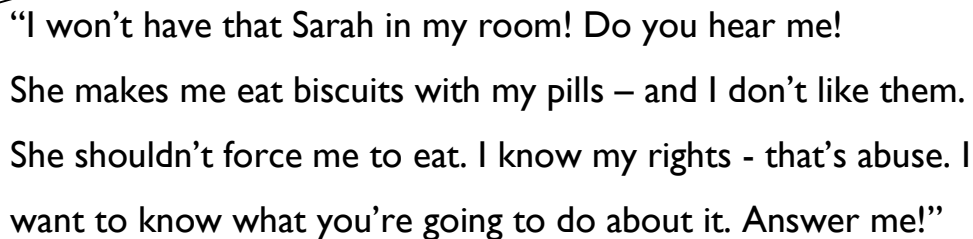
### 3. How would you handle these situations?

First, imagine this.

Mrs Walker is 90, partially deaf and very determined.

One day Mrs Walker comes up to you in front of other people.

She is angry and speaks in a loud voice.



“I won’t have that Sarah in my room! Do you hear me!  
She makes me eat biscuits with my pills – and I don’t like them.  
She shouldn’t force me to eat. I know my rights - that’s abuse. I  
want to know what you’re going to do about it. Answer me!”

Why is Mrs Walker so upset?

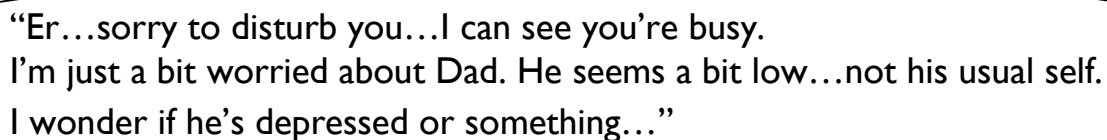
How does being spoken to like that, in front of other people, make you feel?

What would you say to Mrs Walker then and there?

What would you do about what she has said afterwards?

Now imagine this.

You are really very busy preparing for handover when Mr Callow’s son comes up to you. Listen to what he says to you.



“Er...sorry to disturb you...I can see you’re busy.  
I’m just a bit worried about Dad. He seems a bit low...not his usual self.  
I wonder if he’s depressed or something...”

Why is Mr Callow’s son speaking to you when he can see you’re busy?

How does being approached like that, when you are busy, make you feel?

What would you say to Mr Callow’s son then and there?

What would you do about what he has said afterwards?

### 4. Concerns and complaints

When does a concern become a complaint?

<b>Feedback form</b>	Date:			
Staff member's name				
Staff member's job title				
Interviewer's name				
Interviewer's job title				
<b>1. Interviewer's view</b>	The member of staff...	<b>No</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a.	Used spoken communication effectively one-to-one.			
b.	Understands what key words and ideas mean in relation to his/her work.			
<b>2. Interviewer's reasons</b>	The member of staff...	<b>No</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Yes</b>
a.	Expressed him/herself clearly, appropriately and with confidence.			
b.	Showed understanding of specialist care words and ideas; was able to relate them to his/her own work (care knowledge).			
c.	Spoke in a way that was easy to understand (pronunciation).			
d.	Found the words s/he wanted, or explained effectively with other words (general vocabulary).			
e.	Used clear, grammatically accurate language (grammar).			
f.	Spoke at a normal pace, without long pauses, repetition or self-correction (fluency).			
g.	Understood and responded appropriately to instructions and questions (listening).			
<b>3. Next steps to help develop skills and knowledge for the job</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
a.	Interviewer will arrange monitoring, feedback and support from a supervisor.			
b.	Interviewer and member of staff will plan personal development to improve staff member's understanding of key social care words and ideas.			
c.	Interviewer and member of staff will plan personal development to improve staff member's spoken communication skills.			
<b>4. Interviewer's signature</b>	<b>Staff member's signature</b>			

Use the other side of this sheet for notes

<b>Personal development form</b>	Date:	
Staff member's name		
Staff member's job title		
Interviewer's name		
Interviewer's job title		
<b>1. Learning aim: to work safely and meet quality standards, the member of staff should develop the following knowledge and skills</b>		<b>Tick (✓) if "yes"</b>
a. Speaking and listening skills: to communicate clearly and with confidence on the job.		
b. Specialist care terms: to understand and relate key words and ideas to his/her job.		
<b>English language skills (for staff from other countries)</b>		
c. Pronunciation: to speak in a way that is easy for others to understand.		
d. General vocabulary: to be able to find the right words when talking.		
e. Grammar: to help express ideas in precise, accurate language.		
f. Fluency: to speak at a normal pace, without long pauses, repetition, self-correction.		
g. Listening comprehension: to understand questions, requests, instructions.		
<b>2. How will the learning happen?</b>		
<b>3. What support and resources will be needed to make the learning successful?</b>		
<b>4. When will the learning happen?</b>		
<b>5. How will we know the learning has been successful?</b>		
<b>6. Progress review date</b>		
<b>7. Interviewer's signature</b>	<b>Staff member's signature</b>	