



If a complaint from a problematic service user is clearly unjustified or invalid from the outset; what is required of you in terms of a proportionate investigation and response?

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Assistant director, Verita



About Verita

- Verita provides independent expertise to enable regulated organisations to improve their services
- We review complaints processes and provide independent complaints review services:
 - Lottery Forum (Big Lottery Fund, Sport England, Heritage Lottery Fund)
 - Arts Council
 - General Medical Council
 - British Council
 - NHS bodies





About me

- Assistant director - 3 years at Verita
- 5 years in NHS governance (PCTs/CCGs)
- Company secretary of a private company
- Legally qualified



Complaints...



- A free source of the world's most valuable commodity - data!
- They tell you what people think of your services
- Allow you to keep your finger on the pulse

BUT

The people element!





Verita's seven tips for complaint management

1. Talk to the person who is complaining
2. Foster collaboration
3. Apologise promptly
4. Seek third party assistance
5. Be honest and authentic
6. Try to learn from the complaint
7. Be aware of the media

Deconstructing the question...



If a complaint from a problematic service user is clearly unjustified or invalid from the outset; what is required of you in terms of a proportionate investigation and response?

“a problematic service user”

Essential to judge each complaint on its merits - irrelevant who it is from

“clearly unjustified or invalid from the outset”

Clear to who?

Nothing should be clear at the outset - still need to consider it - don't pre-judge...

What is required: investigation and response?



Public law principles:

- A good process
- A reasonable assessment
- Fairness
- Timely response

Or...

what would someone looking over your shoulder think?



What is required: investigation and response?



PROPORTIONATE

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A change of mindset around complaints

- Try to see it as market research
- Be open and collaborative
- Get independent advice if needed
- Support staff - don't forget the people element

“Keep calm... and answer the question”



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