

OVADA Procedure

PROCEDURE: Complaints Procedure
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(SAVE POLICY AS PDF IN ARCHIVE FOLDER AFTER EACH UPDATE)



Complaints Procedure

Introduction

OVADA aims to give the best possible service in all aspects of its work. This procedure provides a means by which people with whom we work may make a formal complaint if they feel that our standards fall short. It is designed for use by anybody not employed by OVADA who has a complaint about our services or the practice of OVADA's team members.

This procedure should be used as a last resort following efforts to resolve differences by informal discussion between the parties directly involved. The use of this procedure will in no way diminish the statutory rights of a complainant. Similarly the procedure does not affect existing arrangements for disciplinary and grievance measures.

If a complaint relates to a child protection matter, then please also refer to our [Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy](#).

Initial Stage

Wherever possible any person wishing to make a complaint should raise their concerns directly with the team member involved or OVADA's Director. The aim of this process should be to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. The team member or Director will use a [Complaint Record Form](#) to make notes and to record any agreed action. This form will be passed to or kept by the Director for future reference.

Making a Formal Complaint

Any person wishing to make a complaint should contact OVADA's Director in writing or by audio recording. Letters or recordings may also be sent by friends or advocates acting on behalf of complainants who are unable to present their own case in full.

The address to which complainants should write is:

The Director
OVADA
14A Osney Lane
Oxford OX1 1NJ

The Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant within 14 days, informing them how the matter will be handled and giving a timetable for the process.

The Chair of Trustees will be informed of the existence of the complaint but will not be provided with full details at this stage.

If the complaint is regarding the work of OVADA's Director then the process below will be led by the Chair of Trustees instead.

The Investigation

The Director will as soon as possible take all practicable steps to ensure that the complaint and its background is fully investigated. Such an investigation will involve careful consideration of all relevant evidence and circumstances and may include:

- a) meetings, telephone conversations and/or correspondence with the complainant
- b) meetings, telephone conversations and/or correspondence with any individual team members involved.

The Director will allow a further 14 days from the date of acknowledgement, for the complainant and individual staff members involved to make submissions. This time scale can be amended if exceptional circumstances exist. OVADA will treat all complaints and

responses to a complaint on a strictly confidential basis and will urge all parties to do likewise.

Any complainant may be accompanied by one friend or advocate at any meeting called by the Director to consider the complaint. Similarly the advice of a friend or advocate may be sought in relation to correspondence or telephone calls arising from the complaint.

The Decision

The Director having carefully and objectively considered all relevant evidence and circumstances will provide a written overview of the investigation and a decision on the complaint to the complainant. The Director will also provide a copy of this to any individual staff member involved and to the Chair of Trustees within 14 days of the closing date for submissions.

Appeals

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director, an appeal may be made to the Chair of Trustees within 14 days of the decision.

The Chair will then:

consider the appeal with 2 other Trustees who have not previously been involved with the complaint; or if they are not available

use the services of an independent assessor

The Chair and members of the committee responsible for hearing the appeal will objectively consider all the evidence available at the first stage of the procedure. Fresh allegations or new evidence will not be considered at the appeal stage. A decision will be reached within 21 days of receipt of the appeal.

The Chair will send a written decision on the appeal to the complainant, the Director, any individual staff member involved and the 2 Trustees within 7 days of reaching a decision.

The decision made by the persons responsible for hearing the appeal will be final.

