

3.2 COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Your Service, Your Say

1. COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.1. Definitions

The “**Institute**” refers to the Clanwilliam Institute Personal Relationship & Family Consultancy having its registered office at 18 Clanwilliam Terrace, Grand Canal Quay, Dublin 2.

“**Clanwilliam Staff**” refers to all employees and service providers who contract their services to the Institute and also to the administrative staff of the Institute.

A “**complaint**” is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Institute (including Clanwilliam Staff).

Any service user of the Institute may bring a complaint against the institute or the Clanwilliam staff and the person bringing the complaint is referred to as the “**Complainant**”.

The person or company against whom the complaint is made is described as the “**Respondent**”.

“**Service User**” includes all the people who use Clanwilliam services including students, clients and stakeholders.

1.2. Purpose of Complaints Policy

The Institute views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

This document attempts to outline expectations and procedures that will contribute to the best standards of practice for Clanwilliam staff.

The procedures are designed to reflect the importance of a respectful collaborative relationship between the Institute, the staff who provide the Institute services and the service users.

1.3. Objectives

- To provide a fair complaints procedure detailing clear expectations, transparency of process and fair and uniform procedures/guidelines.
- To have continued improvements towards best practice in our service.

- To pay attention to the rights and needs of clients, acknowledging imbalances of power in the relationships between professional staff and clients or students.
- To ensure all complaints are investigated in a fair and timely way.
- To facilitate voluntary informal resolution of concerns, complaints and conflict at the earliest opportunity and to avoid unnecessary entrenchment and polarisation.

1.4. Criteria for a Complaint

- Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Institute.
- The Respondent is the Institute or an employee of the Institute; however the resignation of the employee shall not usually be allowed to impede the process of any investigation as long as the alleged offence took place during the Respondent's term of employment.
- The Complainant is over 18 years of age, or if under 18 years of age is represented by a legal guardian.
- A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing (details are overleaf).

A complaint must be lodged within one year of the event which forms the substance of the complaint.

1.5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All identifying information received in the course of a complaint will be confidential to those involved in the process. When a Complainant makes a written complaint, the Respondent will be provided with a copy of the complaint, in the interests of transparency and natural justice.

Retention of all documentation and records in relation to the complaint shall be in accordance with the Institute's Data Protection Policy.

1.6. Responsibility and Administration

The Board of Directors has an overall responsibility for governance and quality assurance in relation to the Complaints Policy. The responsibility of the implementation of this Policy in practice lies with Management who may convene a Complaints Committee.

The Complaints Committee is made up of the following people:

- The Chief Executive of the Institute as Chairperson
- A person appropriate to the task, either internal Clanwilliam "staff" person or external person
- The Manager of the department to which the complaint has been addressed who will perform the secretarial and co-ordinating tasks of the Committee.

If a complaint is made about the behaviour of a manager in carrying out his or her role as manager, the Chief Executive will respond to the complaint. If a complaint is made about the

Chief Executive in the performance of his or her role, the complaint will go to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

No member of the Complaints Committee shall act where there is a conflict of interest.

1.7. Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Agreed by the Board: 6 March 2017

For Review: 6 March 2020

2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

2.1. Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to

The Practice Manager
The Clanwilliam Institute
18 Clanwilliam Terrace
Grand Canal Quay
Dublin 2

or by email to the Practice Manager at office@clanwilliam.ie and will be discussed at Management Team level and forwarded to the relevant Department Head.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to +353 (0)1 676 1363 or in person to any of the Institute's staff members at the address above. Where appropriate or requested by the complainant, the complaint will be passed on to the relevant Department Head.

All complaints, whether verbal or written, will be logged by the relevant Department Head.

2.2. Complaint Process

STAGE 1: MANAGEMENT OF A VERBAL COMPLAINT AT THE POINT OF CONTACT

- Staff have clear delegations to resolve verbal complaints at first point of contact wherever possible.
- Where a complaint is resolved at the point of contact, the complaint must be examined to identify any quality improvements that should be implemented as a result.
- The pertinent staff member will be informed of the complaint and the response.
- Where complaints cannot or should not be resolved at the first point of contact due to their seriousness or complexity, these complaints must be referred to the Management Team for investigation at Stage 2.
- Complainants or respondents may decide not to accept the outcome of the management of the complaint at the point of contact and may seek a review of their complaint at Stage 2 of the process.
- A written record of the complaint, and of the process of investigation and resolution, will be made by the relevant Head of Department.

STAGE 2: INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- Complaints that could not be resolved at Stage 1 or should not be resolved at the first point of contact due to their seriousness or complexity are then passed to the Management Team for resolution by informal means, such as offering an opportunity to discuss the complaint with a relevant manager by phone or in person, or through a formal investigation.

- The Management Team will carry out a pre-investigation to consider the complaint and the appropriate process to be used to manage the complaint. Some complaints may not be processed any further following the pre-investigation and will be returned to the complainant with an explanation as to why the complaint cannot be investigated.
- The Management Team may suggest to the complainant and any other person to whom the complaint relates to finding an informal resolution of the complaint by the parties concerned.
- Informal processes, such as mediation, will be suggested at Stage 2 if both parties agree.
- Where informal resolution was not attempted or was not successful, the Management Team will initiate a formal investigation of the complaint and convene a Complaints Committee.
- The Complaints Committee is responsible for carrying out the formal investigation of the complaint at Stage 3 but may draw on appropriate expertise, skills etc as required. Staff have an obligation to participate and support the investigation of any complaint where requested.
- A written record will be made of this Stage 2 process and resolution by the Management Team.

STAGE 3: FORMAL INVESTIGATION BY COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

- The Complaints Committee will convene and review the complaint with all the evidence available to them and inform the parties involved of the outcome of the investigation.
- Complainants or Respondents may decide not to accept the outcome of the investigation of the formal complaint and may decide to submit an appeal to review the outcome of the investigation.
- Complainants or Respondents have a right to appeal at any stage of the process.

STAGE 4: APPEALS

- The complainant may seek a review of the outcome of the investigation at Stage 3 by the Clanwilliam Board of Directors.
- All requests for an Appeal should be forwarded to: The Board of Directors, Clanwilliam Institute, 18 Clanwilliam Terrace, Dublin 2.
- The Board will review the processes used to carry out the investigation of the complaint and the findings and recommendations made post-investigation.
- The Board will uphold, vary or make a new finding and recommendation.
- The Board may require a new investigation of the complaint or recommend that a local re-investigation of the complaint be carried out by a Complaint Officer independent of the initial investigation team.
- The Complainant and Respondent will be informed of the decision of the Board.