

NIPSO Guidance Note on Recording Complaint Outcomes

Introduction

Understanding and accurately recording whether a complaint is **resolved**, **upheld**, **partially upheld** or **not upheld** is essential. The recording of complaint outcomes enables your organisation to meet their internal and external reporting obligations and comply with the MCHP. It helps your organisation analyse trends, spot early warning signs, and identify service gaps to prevent repeat complaints. It also helps provide quick and mutually agreeable full and final resolutions and helps identify areas of good practice.

The following provides an explanation of each of the four complaint outcomes.

Resolved

A complaint is 'resolved' when your organisation takes action to resolve it **without** fully investigating the complaint or reaching any final conclusions about whether there were any failings (for example, your organisation agrees a solution with the complainant before it looks into/investigates the complaint). The action is mutually agreed by both your organisation and the complainant and there is a full and final resolution of the complaint.

Where a complaint is resolved, an organisation may not need to look into the matter any further. **However**, in some cases it will still be appropriate to continue looking into the underlying issue, for example where there is potentially evidence of a wider problem that may need to be resolved/fixed, or potential for useful learning or improvement. In these circumstances, you should use your judgement in deciding when this is appropriate.

Upheld

A complaint is 'upheld' when your organisation identifies failing(s) by it and remedial action is required. In these circumstances, the organisation should always uphold the complaint and apologise to the customer.

For clarity, if you know your organisation fell short of its expected standards, you should always uphold (or partially uphold) the complaint.

Partially Upheld

'Partially upheld' complaints are when one or some elements of the complaint are verified as valid failings by your organisation and require remedial action. Similar to upheld complaints, in partially upheld complaints, the organisation should always uphold the issue(s) of complaint and apologise to the customer.

Not Upheld

A '**not upheld**' complaint outcome is reached when following an investigation there is no or unsubstantiated evidence to verify that the complaint is valid and no remedial action by your organisation is required.

Importantly, even in circumstances where complaints are 'not upheld,' they can still provide valuable insights for service improvements. For example, an investigation may highlight areas for improvement, offering an opportunity for positive change.