

# PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND INVESTIGATIONS

A range of one-day courses which can lead to a nationally recognised qualification designed to equip staff with the essential skills and knowledge to undertake complaints investigations to best practice standards.

## ABOUT BOND SOLON

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Bond Solon is the UK's leading legal training organisation for non-lawyers. Over the past 25 years over 250,000 delegates have attended our training programmes. We work with a broad range of public and commercial organisations, providing skills and knowledge-based training that gives employees the confidence and competencies to work to best practice standards. Bond Solon delivers training throughout the UK and worldwide.

## WHY UNDERTAKE COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND INVESTIGATION TRAINING?

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For any organisation it is essential that the handling of a complaint, any subsequent investigation and reporting of findings and recommendations are carried out professionally and to best practice standards. Often staff tasked with undertaking a complaints investigation on behalf of their organisation have had little or no formal recognised training in this area.

Failure to respond to a complaint properly and justify decisions can have considerable consequences for an organisation including adverse media attention, additional costs and the complaint being escalated. Conversely, a proactive and well-structured complaints process increases the likelihood of early resolution and can provide positive improvement opportunities for the organisation.

Bond Solon has designed a range of intense one-day training courses that will provide delegates with the essential knowledge and skills to conduct a complaints investigation from start to finish to best practice standards. Delegates will learn how to professionally carry out a thorough investigation, establish facts and secure relevant, reliable and credible information to ensure the complaint is handled fairly and robustly without undue escalation.

Areas of training include:

- **Process, Procedure and Information Gathering**
- **Questioning and Communication Techniques in Complaints**
- **Responding to Complaints - Letter and Report Writing**

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND INVESTIGATIONS WILL:

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- Equip delegates with the necessary skills, knowledge and procedures to carry out a complaints investigation to best practice standards
- Instil confidence in those tasked to handle complaints
- Reduce costs and create a standardised approach to handling and investigating complaints across your organisation
- Help promote early resolution of complaints
- Provide a structured development path for all complaints handlers, giving them the necessary competencies to carry out their work effectively and to best practice standards
- Provide the delegates with essential skills which will also benefit them in other areas of their working practice



I personally found the training to be excellent - informative, interesting and very relevant.

The trainers had an approachable style, moving things along at just the right pace, and making sure that everyone had a chance to participate. Even though I have a lot of experience dealing with complaints, I learnt so much over three worthwhile training days and I would recommend Bond Solon to any organisation that values and acts on customer feedback.

**ALISTAIR COOK**

Head of Office  
Judicial Appointments and  
Conduct Ombudsman



Quality of care is not just about getting the treatment and care of patients right. It is also about putting things right when mistakes occur. This means handling complaints promptly and sensitively, and carrying out thorough investigations to establish the facts of the case. It also means giving complainants timely and evidence-based responses, ensuring that any failings in care are properly acknowledged and explained.

**LISTENING AND LEARNING (2012)**  
The Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE TRAINING?

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These courses have been successfully delivered across the UK to a wide variety of public bodies including central and local government departments, ombudsmen, the NHS and commercial organisations.

The courses are suitable for anyone who may be tasked to undertake a complaints investigation including:

- Complaints Investigators, Officers & Caseworkers
- Managers and other staff tasked with undertaking complaints investigations as part of their wider role
- Staff working in a complaints handling capacity for ombudsmen schemes and other dedicated complaints handling bodies
- Adjudicators

## CAN THE TRAINING LEAD TO A RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION?

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Yes. The Professional Training in Complaints Handling and Investigations programme is made up of a number of one-day courses. These courses can be attended as stand-alone training or together over a period of time leading to the **nationally recognised Professional Award in Complaints Handling and Investigation**, awarded by The International Compliance Association (ICA) in association with The University of Manchester Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS).

## PROFESSIONAL AWARD IN COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND INVESTIGATIONS

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Delegates who undertake three days of training and successfully complete three post-course assessments will be eligible for the **Professional Award in Complaints Handling and Investigations**.

- **Process, Procedure and Information Gathering (1 day)**
- **Questioning and Communication Techniques in Complaints (1 day)**
- **Responding to Complaints - Letter and Report Writing (1 day)**

## A UNIQUE APPROACH IN BOTH THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF YOUR TRAINING NEEDS

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Bond Solon will work closely with key personnel to ensure the training is tailored to your organisation's specific needs, incorporating your complaints policies and procedures.

As a dedicated training company, Bond Solon is fully aware that delegates require a range of learning styles on each course to ensure everyone acquires the necessary knowledge and skills. The training we deliver is interactive and the delegates will learn by doing and receive feedback and support from their peers and trainers. Case studies are based on real practical examples with the learning focusing on delegate participation.

## Process, Procedure and Information Gathering (1 day)

The way information and evidence is gathered has a major impact on successful complaints handling, response and resolution. If done correctly, the investigation should help establish the root cause of the complaint and the appropriate way to handle it.

This one-day course is aimed at introducing the delegates to complaints handling and resolution, in terms of principles and practice. It is designed to give them the knowledge, skills and techniques to carry out a complaints investigation to best practice standards.

The course will cover the whole process of planning a complaints investigation and collecting, recording, assessing and evaluating evidence/documentation.

It will also define human factors and their potential influence on persons involved throughout the complaints process.

Delegates will learn how to conduct a fair and objective investigation to establish the facts in the case; in doing so enabling them to support their findings and justify their subsequent actions, decisions and recommendations.

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Being able to accurately define what a complaint is to ensure issues are treated in the appropriate manner
- Planning and conducting a fair and proportionate complaints investigation
- Recognising how human factors can influence the complaints process
- Identifying different types of evidence/information
- Being able to research, collect, record and evaluate evidence and documentation from a wide variety of sources to determine the root cause of the complaint and/or reach justifiable conclusions or decisions
- Creating, maintaining and enhancing best practice standards in record keeping

**Compulsory module for the Professional Award  
in Complaints Handling and Investigations.**

- i** Public courses are run in central London. If you have 5 or more colleagues we can come to you and deliver the training in-house at your organisation.



The trainer had relevant experience and understanding of mental health to apply to the work setting and general use of skills and how to apply them more widely. Excellent training, one of the best courses I have attended. The skills are applicable in so many areas, not just complaints!

**NIKKI COLLINS**  
Psychologist  
West London Mental  
Health



## Questioning and Communication Techniques (1 day)

Staff tasked with conducting a complaints investigation will often need to question a variety of people, including the complainant, a range of witnesses and those who are the subject of the complaint. These interviews will either be conducted face to face or over the telephone. Asking the right questions is crucial in ensuring such interviews are useful to the investigative process and are conducted fairly.

It is essential that these staff have the requisite competencies to be able to undertake this role to best practice standards, enabling them to obtain key information to effectively deal with a complaint.

During this one-day course delegates will learn how to identify the issues around the complaint and effectively plan and structure appropriate interviews. They will consider a range of questioning techniques available to them. Delegates will also learn how to appropriately and sensitively handle witnesses who may be angry, upset and confused.

They will also take into consideration the impact of human factors when preparing an interview strategy or communicating with parties involved in the investigation process.

Through role-play and trainer-led constructive feedback this course will instil the fundamental principles and develop the delegates' ability to carry out effective questioning and fact finding interviews.

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Planning and preparing a fact finding interview both face to face and over the telephone
- Being able to use different questioning techniques to establish the facts and to obtain all the available evidence
- Structuring interviews by applying the PEACE (planning, preparation, engage and explain, account, closure and evaluation) model and consider other interviewing models
- Evaluating the impact of human factors on the interview process
- Managing challenging behaviours

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The training raised my understanding of the Complaints procedure. The trainer's knowledge was excellent. I felt able to approach him and ask extra questions to support my understanding. A really well organised day.

**SHIRLEY JAMES**

Senior Probation Officer  
National Probation Service



The Bond Solon training was excellent. The trainer created a safe, encouraging and interactive environment which enabled us to enhance existing knowledge. Particularly useful were the opportunities to review real cases and get constructive feedback from the trainer. I will have no hesitation to recommend Bond Solon to anyone who should ask in the future.

### CHRISTINE WEBB

Modern Matron  
Older Peoples  
Mental Health,  
Rotherham Doncaster &  
South Humber NHS  
Foundation Trust

## Responding to Complaints – Letter and Report Writing (1 day)

Final decision letters and reports produced after a complaints investigation often fail to identify and deal with the core issues of the complaint, and also neglect to lay out a coherent and credible basis for the investigation's findings and recommendations. Poor communication at this stage can often lead to unnecessary escalation of complaints.

A good response letter and any subsequent report can also prove invaluable for feeding back to both the complainant and the organisation. The report should provide sound recommendations of how to implement improvements to the risk assessment process and working practices of the organisation.

During this one-day course delegates will learn how to improve the content, structure and style of the letters and reports they produce through adopting best practice standards.

By reference to model response letters and report formats and use of objective assessment criteria to assess their letter and reports, delegates will improve the quality of the written documentation they produce.

### KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Being able to include documentary, witness, interview and other evidence in letters and reports
- Identifying issues, facts and the source and weight of those facts, and including them in the response
- Being able to use appropriate layout, format and style in letters and reports
- Correctly setting out the findings and analysis for each point of the complaint in the letter and report
- How to write with clarity, objectivity and purpose
- Developing an objective and critical eye in relation to the complaint letter and report writing

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in Complaints Handling and Investigations.

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## A Selection of our clients

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### OMBUDSMAN SCHEMES

Housing Ombudsman Service, Judicial Appointments & Conduct Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Office for Judicial Complaints, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, Pensions Ombudsman, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Property Ombudsman, Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, Scottish Legal Complaints Commission, Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Air Accidents Investigation Branch, BIS, Civil Aviation Authority, Competition and Markets Authority, Environment Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, DSTL, Gambling Commission, Health Protection Agency, HMRC, Home Office, Information Commissioner's Office, Insolvency Service, Maritime & Coastguard Agency, Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, MOD, Office of Rail and Road, Ofgem, Ofsted, Ofwat, Pensions Regulator, Rural Payments Agency, Serious Fraud Office, SOCA, Solicitors Regulation Authority.

### HEALTH

Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Basildon & Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, Powys Teaching Health Board, RDaSH NHS Foundation Trust, South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aberdeenshire, Birmingham, Blaenau Gwent, Bournemouth, Brent, Buckinghamshire, Camden, Cardiff, Chelsea & Kensington, Chiltern, City of London, Conwy, Denbighshire, Devon, East Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Enfield, Glasgow, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hampshire, Hillingdon, Kirklees, Leicester, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Newcastle, Northumberland, Poole, Sheffield, Slough, South Lanarkshire, Southwark, Staffordshire, Swansea, Thanet, Torfaen, Tower Hamlets, Vale of Glamorgan, Westminster, York.

### COMPANIES

Adidas, Argos, Aviva, AXA, B&Q, Barclays, Betfair, Biffa, British Gas, BskyB, BT, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Ernst & Young, Great Western Railway, G4S, GAP, Gatwick Airport, HBOS, Homebase, HSBC, John Lewis, KPMG, LV=, Marks & Spencer, Microsoft, Mothercare, National Grid, Northern Ireland Water, PwC, O2, Orange, Royal Bank of Scotland, Santander, Serco, Severn Trent Water, South West Trains, Staples, Tesco, TNT Express, Translink, Virgin Trains, Vodafone, William Hill

### FIRE BRIGADES

Avon, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon and Somerset, Dorset, East Sussex, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Merseyside, Mid & West Wales, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northern Ireland, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, South Yorkshire, South Wales, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Wiltshire.

### POLICE

Avon and Somerset, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Central Scotland, Cheshire, City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Greater Manchester, Guernsey, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, College of Policing, PSNI, National Crime Agency, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Mercia.

## Bond Solon

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