

Complaints and Complements - Quick Guide for Professionals



This leaflet provides a quick guide for professionals about making a complaint or complement about any DVACT-PAI service. The full guide can be found on our website at dvact.org/complaintsguideforprofessionals

Our Key Principles

DVACT-PAI is committed to providing safe, professional, respectful and effective domestic abuse assessments and programmes for parents and families.

We recognise that our organisation is one part of a wider network of professionals working to support children and families, and value the professional relationships we have with social workers, solicitors and other referring professionals. Their feedback helps us understand what we are doing well, identify areas where we can improve and ensure that our services continue to meet the needs of families and the professionals supporting them.

We therefore aim to:

- listen to concerns;
- respond respectfully;
- investigate complaints fairly;
- communicate clearly;
- protect confidentiality;
- act promptly where safeguarding concerns arise;
- maintain professional independence;
- acknowledge mistakes where they occur;
- learn from complaints;
- recognise good practice;
- work constructively with referring professionals.



We welcome appropriate professional challenge because constructive challenge can improve decision-making and ultimately contribute to better outcomes for children and families.

We ask professionals who refer to us to:

- raise concerns promptly;
- provide accurate information;
- share only information necessary for the complaint;
- respect confidentiality;
- engage constructively with the investigation; and
- continue to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults.

What can I complain about?

You can raise a complaint or concern about any aspect of our service, including service quality, communication, professional conduct, safeguarding and risk.

Some matters may be better dealt with through another process.

For example:

- a request for additional information about a report;
- a request for clarification of an assessment;
- a request for information that was not included in a referral;
- a request to correct a factual error;
- a disagreement about a professional opinion;
- a request to amend a report because a professional does not agree with its conclusions.

Where possible, we will try to resolve these matters informally and promptly. However, if the concern relates to the quality, integrity, conduct or safety of our service, it may be appropriate to treat it as a formal complaint.

Complaints About Professional Opinions or Assessments

We recognise that referring professionals may not always agree with an assessment, recommendation or professional opinion.

A difference of professional opinion does not automatically mean that the service provided was inadequate.

Where a complaint concerns the independence or integrity of an assessment, it will be reviewed appropriately and, where necessary, by someone who was not directly involved in the original decision.

If a professional has a concern about the content of an assessment or report, used in family court proceedings they should raise the concern with us as soon as possible.

However, the complaints process does not replace the court's own procedures.

We will not seek to interfere with judicial decision-making or attempt to influence the outcome of court proceedings.

Where appropriate, we will:

- clarify factual matters;
- correct genuine factual errors;
- explain our assessment methodology;
- consider relevant additional information;
- review concerns about professional practice;
- identify any appropriate amendments or actions.

We will maintain the independence and professional integrity of assessments.

What to do if you have concerns

Step 1 – Raise it early

Where appropriate, contact the member of staff you have been dealing with.

Step 2 – If it cannot be resolved

Make a formal complaint using:

Email: claireverney.pai@dvact.org

Telephone: 02039678368

Step 3 – If there is an immediate safeguarding concern

Do not wait for the complaints process. Contact the appropriate safeguarding service/emergency service and notify DVACT-PAI where appropriate.

Step 4 – If the concern involves data protection

Clearly identify that you are making a data protection complaint so it can be managed through the appropriate process.

Step 5 – If the concern relates to a professional

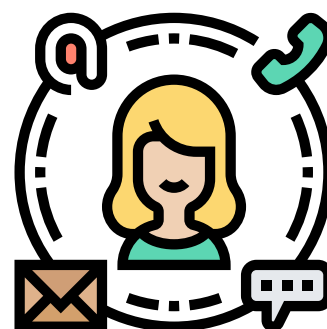
Where appropriate, the concern may need to be referred to the relevant employer, safeguarding authority or professional regulator.

Compliments

We also welcome compliments and positive feedback.

Professionals may wish to tell us when:

- a practitioner has provided an excellent service;
- an assessment has been particularly helpful;
- communication has been effective;
- a programme has supported positive change;
- our service has helped a child or family;
- a member of staff has demonstrated professionalism or compassion;
- a colleague has gone above and beyond expectations.



Positive feedback is valuable to our organisation and to our staff and with permission, we may use anonymised feedback to:

- recognise staff contributions;
- improve morale;
- demonstrate the impact of our service;
- identify good practice;
- inform training and development;
- support quality assurance and service improvement.

We will not publish identifiable information about a child, parent or family without an appropriate lawful basis and, where required, consent.

How to raise a complaint or compliment

Where possible please submit a complaint or compliment in writing to our Complaints and Feedback Lead Claire Verney at claireverney.pai@dvact.org. You can also raise a concern verbally by calling Claire on 0203 9678368