

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the steps which a complainant must follow when submitting complaints to us about any of its services and the steps we will take when responding to such complaints.

Scope

This procedure applies to all customers who use our services.

Responsibility and Authority

The Director is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is implemented correctly and equitably.

Procedure

1. General Statement

- It is important that all customers are fully aware of this procedure.
- We will carry out an annual review of the policy and revise it, if necessary, in response to feedback or good practice.

2. Complaints: Stage 1

- A complaint must be made in writing or by e-mail, must state clearly the nature of the complaint and must be addressed to the Director within 14 days of the incident taking place. It is important that the complainant checks that this communication has been received as technology can occasionally be unreliable.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be sent to complainant within 3 working days.
- Complaints, in the first instance, will be dealt with by the Director ensuring that this individual has no personal interest in the complaint being made.
- The Director carries out an investigation and reviews all the documentation, then reaches a decision.
- A response time of 10 working days (15 working days for overseas) will be adhered to.

The possible outcomes are:

- Complaint upheld and appropriate action will be taken to remedy the situation and recompense the complainant.
- Rejection of the grounds of complaint with clearly stated reasons
- If the complaint is rejected, or the complainant does not accept the outcome as satisfying the original grounds, the complainant will be informed that they may, within 10 working days of receipt of the decision, ask for the complaint to be referred to the Medical Director and senior staff for Complaints Stage 2.

3. Complaints: Stage 2

- If a request for complaint referral is received within the timeline, the detail will be sent to the Medical Director, plus an additional independent individual for scrutiny (including ensuring that the procedures up to that point have been followed correctly, fairly and fully) and for a decision within 20 working days.
- The Medical Director will write to the complainant with this decision.

Possible outcomes are:

- Complaint upheld and appropriate action will be taken to remedy the situation and recompense the complainant.
- Rejection of the grounds of complaint with clearly stated reasons
- If the complaint is again rejected, the complainant will be informed that they may, within 10 working days of receipt of the decision, ask for the complaint to be referred to Final Independent Review.

4. Complaints: Stage 3 - Independent Review

- If so requested, the submission will be sent to an Independent Reviewer, who will review the process that has been carried out, ensuring that the procedures up to that point have been followed correctly, fairly and fully. The independent reviewer will make recommendations back to us.
- The decision resulting from this review will be final and will be passed to the complainant by the Independent Reviewer within 20 working days.

Possible outcomes are:

- Complaint upheld and appropriate action will be taken to remedy the situation and recompense the complainant.
- Rejection of the grounds of complaint with clearly stated reasons

- The independent member and the independent reviewer shall be appointed on the basis that they possess the appropriate competence for the fulfilment of these roles.

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