



NES Healthcare complaint procedure for patients to whom our medical services are provided

1 Introduction

1.1 Policy statement

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all staff are aware of the complaint procedure within NES Healthcare, affording patients or their representatives the opportunity to make a complaint about the care or treatment they have received from our medical staff.

1.2 Status

This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be modified or withdrawn at any time.

1.3 Training and support

NES Healthcare will provide guidance and support to help those to whom it applies and understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Additional support will be provided to managers and supervisors to enable them to deal more effectively with matters arising from this policy.

2 Scope

2.1 Who it applies to

This document applies to all employees of NES Healthcare UK where we take complaints seriously and ensures that they are investigated in an unbiased, transparent, non-judgemental and timely manner.

We will maintain communication with the complainant (or their representative) throughout, ensuring they know the complaint is being taken seriously.

NES Healthcare aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have in regard to the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

3 Guidance

3.1 Legislation

Our complaints procedure permits a patient (or their nominated representative) to submit a complaint either to NES Healthcare or to the hospital where our employee has been seconded. NES Healthcare adopts a patient-focused approach to complaint handling which conforms to the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman's Principles of Good Complaints Handling as set out in <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/about-us/our-principles/principles-good-complaint-handling>

Our process includes advice for patients on how to escalate to the Ombudsman as referenced in the actions following the Patterson inquiry (Recommendation 6a).

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-inquiry-report-into-the-issues-raised-by-former-surgeon-ian-paterson/government-response-to-the-independent-inquiry-report-into-the-issues-raised-by-former-surgeon-ian-paterson>

3.2 Definitions of a complaint

A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission or decision of NES Healthcare and its employees, either verbal or written, and whether justified or not, which requires a response.

There is no difference between a 'formal' and an 'informal' complaint. Both are expressions of dissatisfaction.

3.3 Complaints procedure promulgation

With our employees, caring for patients on different sites corporate and local management is well aware of who to contact regarding the complaints process. In addition, the process is included on our website.

3.4 Responsible person

At NES Healthcare the responsible person is Dr Stephen Drotske, Medical Director. He is responsible for ensuring compliance with the complaints regulations and making sure action is taken as a result of the complaint. He can be contacted at Stephen.drotske@neshealthcare.co.uk or at 01296 746150.

3.5 Complaints Manager

At NES Healthcare the Complaints Manager is Justyn Tollyfield who acts as the Operations Director. He is responsible for managing all complaints procedures.

3.6 Complainant options

The complainant, or their representative, can complain about any aspect of care or treatment they have received to:

NES Healthcare UK via the Complaints Manager

Telephone 01296 746140,

email justyn.tollyfield@neshealthcare.co.uk

or in writing: Mr Justyn Tollyfield, NES Healthcare UK, Barclays House, Aylesbury, HP19 8DB.

3.7 Timescale

The time constraint on bringing a complaint is 12 months from the occurrence giving rise to the complaint, or 12 months from the time that they become aware of the matter about which they wish to complain.

If, however, there are good reasons for complaints not being made within the timescale detailed above, consideration may be afforded to investigating the complaint if it is still feasible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly. Should any doubt arise, further guidance should be sought from the Responsible Officer at stephen.drotske@neshealthcare.co.uk.

3.8 Response times

The complainant has a right to be regularly updated regarding the progress of their complaint. The Complaints Manager at NES Healthcare will:

- Provide an initial response to acknowledge any complaint within three working days after the complaint is received
- Provide regular updates during the investigation
- Aim to resolve the complaint within 40 days

The Complaints Manager will negotiate a plan with the complainant or their representative which will detail the agreed timescales for investigation.

3.9 Verbal and written complaints

Patients can opt to complain either verbally or in writing. No matter what the cause of the complaint, all staff will offer empathy when entering into discussions with the complainant.

If a patient wishes to complain verbally, an appointment will be made for them to meet the Complaints Manager. A verbal complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Complaints Manager, or nominated deputy in their absence. The Complaints Manager will record the verbal complaint in the complaints log; this will enable any trends to be identified and improvements to services made if applicable. The Complaints Manager will make a note of any discussions with the patient or their representative.

Discussing the nature of the complaint with the complainant in person or via telephone may enable a local resolution, which is the quickest method of resolving a complaint and will negate the requirement for the complaint to proceed through the formal complaint process.

If a patient opts to complain in writing (letter or email), the Complaints Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days. This acknowledgement will offer the complainant the opportunity to have a discussion about their complaint, while explaining the process and enabling the Complaints Manager to determine if local resolution is achievable. Where possible, patients and/or their representatives should be encouraged to use the complaint form at Annex A of this policy.

If local resolution is not an option, the Complaints Manager will then discuss with the complainant a complaints plan and an agreed time frame for an investigation. Complainants should be advised that this timescale is merely indicative and there may, on occasion, be the need to liaise with other service providers, i.e. secondary care, which could delay the process. However, reassurance will be provided that the complainant will be provided with regular updates by the Complaints Manager regarding their complaint.

3.10 Investigating complaints

NES Healthcare will ensure that complaints are investigated effectively and in accordance with extant legislation and guidance. This practice will follow eight standards when addressing complaints:

1. The complainant has a single point of contact in the organisation and is placed at the centre of the process. The nature of their complaint and the outcome they are seeking is established at the outset.
2. The complaint undergoes initial assessment and any necessary immediate action is taken. A lead investigator is identified.
3. Investigations are thorough, where appropriate obtaining independent evidence and opinion, and are carried out in accordance with local procedures, national guidance and within legal frameworks.
4. The investigator reviews, organises and evaluates the investigative findings.
5. The judgement reached by the decision maker is transparent, reasonable and based on the evidence available.
6. The complaint documentation is accurate and complete. The investigation is formally recorded, the level of detail appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the complaint.
7. Both the complainant and those complained about are responded to adequately.
8. The investigation of the complaint is complete, impartial and fair.

3.11 Final formal response to a complaint

Upon completion of the investigation, a formal written response will be sent to the complainant and will include the following information:

- An explanation of how the complaint was considered
- An apology, if appropriate
- An explanation based on facts
- Whether the complaint in full or in part is upheld
- The conclusions reached in relation to the complaint, including any remedial action that the organisation considers to be appropriate
- Confirmation that the organisation is satisfied that any action has been or will be actioned
- Where possible, we will respond to people about any lessons learnt
- Information and contact details for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman as the next stage of the complaints process

The Complaints Manager or the Responsible Officer will clearly stipulate that this response is the final response to be issued by NES Healthcare, and if the complainant is not satisfied then they should contact the Ombudsman.

3.12 Confidentiality in relation to complaints

Any complaint is investigated with the utmost confidence and all associated documentation will be held separately from the complainant's medical records. Complaint confidentiality will be maintained, ensuring only managers and staff who are involved in the investigation know the particulars of the complaint.

3.13 Summary

The care and treatment delivered by NES Healthcare is done so with due diligence and in accordance with current guidelines. However, it is acknowledged that sometimes things can go wrong. By having an effective complaints process in place, we are able to investigate and resolve complaints in a timely manner, achieving the desired outcome for service users, whilst also identifying lessons learnt and ultimately improving service delivery.



Annex A – Patient Complaint Form

SECTION 1: PATIENT DETAILS

Surname	Maiden name		
Forename	<table border="1"><tr><td>Title</td></tr><tr><td>(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)</td></tr></table>	Title	(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)
Title			
(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)			
Date of birth	Address:		
Telephone No.	Postcode:		

SECTION 2: COMPLAINT DETAILS

Please give full details of the complaint below, including dates, times, locations and names of any NES healthcare UK staff (if known). Continue on a separate page if required.

SECTION 3: SIGNATURE

Surname & initials	Title (Mr,Mrs,Ms,Dr)
Signature	Date



Annex B – Third Party Patient Complaint Form

SECTION 1: PATIENT DETAILS

Surname	Maiden name				
Forename	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Title</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)</td> </tr> </table>	Title			(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)
Title					
	(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)				
Date of birth	Address:				
Telephone No.	Postcode:				

SECTION 2: THIRD PARTY DETAILS

Surname	Forename				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Title</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)</td> </tr> </table>	Title			(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)	Address:
Title					
	(i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr)				
Telephone No.	Postcode:				

SECTION 3: DECLARATION

I hereby authorise the individual detailed in Section 2 to act on my behalf in making this complaint and to receive such information as may be considered relevant to the complaint. I understand that any information given about me is limited to that which is relevant to the subsequent investigation of the complaint and may only be disclosed to those people who have consented to act on my behalf.

This authority is for an indefinite period/for a limited period only*. Where a limited period applies, this authority is valid until/...../..... (insert date).

(* Delete as necessary)

SECTION 4: SIGNATURE

Surname & initials	Title (Mr,Mrs,Ms,Dr)
Signature	Date