

COMPLAINTS POLICY

The clinic has a responsibility to ensure that users of the services provided have easy access to information about how to raise a concern or make a complaint and that the issues are responded to promptly, fairly and justly without prejudice to the care and treatment of the service user. At the same time the clinic will also respect the dignity of the service user and its staff. The clinic is committed to ensuring that the complaints procedure can be accessed on a fair and equal basis by all patients regardless of race, language, culture, disability, religion or belief, age, gender, and sexual orientation. We must be mindful of our obligations under equality legislation and endeavours to identify and minimise any barriers faced by patients and their relatives when using the clinic's complaints process.

Overview of timeframes:

Timeframe	Description
Day 0	Receipt of a complaint letter/email or request for internal appeal by the Clinic.
Day 0 + 2 working days	Acknowledgment of the complaint letter/email must be sent to the complainant.
Day 0 + 10 working days	If the complaint is a clinical matter, an investigation will be undertaken with statements and responses received by the relevant Associate within 10 working days.
Day 0 + 20 working days	Full written response sent from Hormone Health to the complainant. If it is not possible to send the full response, an updated letter will be provided every 20 working days until the full written response can be sent.

1.1 POLICY DETAIL AND PROCESS

Patients have a right to raise concerns or make a complaint. Information on how to raise concerns and complaints about the services will be available and displayed throughout the clinic, Hormone Health website and in the written patient information. To raise a complaint by email this can be sent to enquiries@hormonehealth.co.uk.

1.2 Verbal concerns

Where concerns are raised in person or over the telephone directly with clinic staff, that person should make all reasonable efforts to resolve the situation promptly, in accordance with the complainant's wishes. If the person to whom the complaint is made is unable to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant, then advice should be immediately sought from the relevant Manager.

It is important that a complainant experiences willingness by staff to listen to what they have to say. They must be taken to a quiet area where staff can sit down with them to have a discussion without interruptions.

- Staff should listen carefully to understand the nature of the complaint & acknowledge it.
- Staff should find out what is needed to help to resolve the complaint.
- Staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff must try and resolve minor issues without delay and take responsibility for any further action and communication.
- Staff must explain to the complainant how their complaint will be dealt with and therefore need to be fully conversant with this Complaints Policy.

1.3 FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- Patients who wish to formalise their concerns or complaints will be asked to write in the first instance to their Associate.
- In cases where the details of the complaint relate to services delivered directly by a site of The Fertility Partnership the patient complaint should be passed to the appropriate Quality Manager and The Fertility Partnership Complaints Policy followed.
- Where the complaint relates to clinical matters or processes under the control of Hormone Health an investigation, including statements from those involved, will be completed. The formal response will be written by an associate on behalf of Hormone Health. Once complete a copy should be sent to the Quality Manager and General Manager for review of The Fertility Partnership.
- The Quality Manager must be made aware of all complaints received so that they can be logged on Q PULSE and acknowledged with the patient.
- The person managing the complaint must carefully read the letter and extract a 'statement of complaint'. This will be a succinct summary, preferably in bullet points. Any requests from the complainant that require immediate action must be dealt with first, including requests for medical records, Freedom of Information Act requests and Data Protection Act requests.
- An acknowledgement must be sent to the complainant within two working days, but the Quality Manager or Patient Support Lead indicating that a full response will be sent within 20 working days unless agreed otherwise. Hormone Health Business Manager will ensure oversight of timelines being adhered to.

- The person managing the complaint must make a thorough investigation into each issue raised by the complainant. Once it is determined which staff are responsible for each element of the complaint, they will be asked to investigate the complaint and provide detailed written and signed statements to the person managing the complaint.
- A full explanatory draft complaint response letter must be completed by 15 working days. The response should be proofread for consistency, clinical accuracy, spelling, grammar, and style.
- On receipt of the response the Quality Manager will record, where appropriate, all proposed corrective/preventative actions on Q PULSE.
- The patient should be informed in the response letter if any improvement actions have been made because of their complaint. It is important that patients are aware that we are a service that responds to patients concerns and wishes and that we continually make improvements to our service because of patient feedback.
- The final version of the complaint response letter must be in PDF format sent to the patient within the stated 20 working days together with either full copies of statements or extracts from statements as appropriate. Hormone Health will issue the response to patients in cases that relate solely to clinical matters. For all other complaints the QM will issue the response having obtained statements from all relevant parties.
- If the letter is sent by email, then the email address must be double checked before sending and sent with a read receipt where available.
- If a hard copy is requested and sent, it must be signed by the person completing the response letter before sending by mail marked 'Private and Confidential'.

1.4 AUDIT OF COMPLAINTS

- Details of the dates and themes of complaints are made on the clinic complaint log, and registered on Q Pulse in Non-Conformities CA/PA.
- It is important to learn lessons from concerns and complaints and appropriate service improvements are implemented when a complaint is upheld or partly upheld.
- Accurate records of a complaint, the response and any corrective actions must be reviewed by Senior Managers as part of the Quality Management System review process.