



# Practice Complaints Procedure

## Definition of a complaint

Any communication involving goods or a service that requires an investigation and formal response. Complaints may be made by e-mail or phone.

## Process

If you are unhappy with the services you have received from us we would like to know about it as soon as possible so we can investigate your concerns and explain, apologise and take positive action where necessary.

In most circumstances, if you tell us about your concern quickly, we can resolve matters straightaway. To let us know about something with which you are unhappy please contact Dena in the first instance.

If you are not fully satisfied you can put your concerns in writing and use our formal Complaint Resolution Procedure which meets with the requirements set out by the Independent Doctors Federation (IDF) for its members and also the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS).

The Complaint Resolution Procedure has three stages and reflects the principles of the ISCAS Code of Practice:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Stage 1 | Local resolution within the individual practice            |
| Stage 2 | IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure to review the complaint |
| Stage 3 | Independent Adjudication from ISCAS                        |

Please note that Stages 1, 2 and 3 fall within the ISCAS Code of Practice for Complaints Management. A copy of this can be obtained from the IDF or from ISCAS.

## **Scope**

Attention is drawn to the sections of the ISCAS Code which clearly explain what the Code does and does not cover. You should understand that if the complaint is not covered by the ISCAS code then stages 2 and 3 will not be available.

## **Stage 1**

To start the formal Complaint Resolution Procedure you should write to:

Dena Thorley via [dena@countryhealth.co.uk](mailto:dena@countryhealth.co.uk)

You should state what has caused you to have concerns and make your points clear. Please document when the relevant events took place and what results you expect from your complaint.

Complaints should normally be made as soon as possible at Stage 1, and within 6 months of the date of the event complained about, or within 6 months of the matter coming to the attention of the complainant.

The time limit may be extended by the Independent Health Practitioner where the complainant has good reason for not making a complaint in the time limit (for example, where a complainant has been grieving), and there is a realistic opportunity of conducting a fair and effective investigation into the issues raised.

The named person at the practice will send you an acknowledgement within three working days of receipt of the complaint. You will be offered a telephone/WhatsApp time to discuss your complaint and to agree with the heads of the complaint.

The investigation of your complaint will involve reviewing all the correspondence and clinical records as well as statements provided by clinicians and others involved.

Reasonable assistance will be provided for complainants where required e.g. for those with a disability or those whose first language is not English.

A full response to your complaint will be made within 20 days of receipt of the complaint. If the investigation is still in progress after 20 days an email will be sent to you explaining the delay and a full response made within five days of reaching a conclusion. In any event a holding correspondence will be sent every 20 days where an investigation is continuing.

If you remain dissatisfied following the final Stage 1 response, then you can request a review of your complaint, known as Stage 2 by writing to:

Complaint Manager  
The Independent Doctors Federation  
Lettsom House  
11 Chandos Street  
Marylebone  
London  
W1G 9EB

Escalation to Stage 2 must be made in writing within six months of the final Stage 1 response.

## **Stage 2**

The IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure will consider your complaint. The IDF Complaint Manager will send you an acknowledgement of your letter within three working days of receipt of your complaint and will request a summary of the matters that remain outstanding that you wish to be investigated.

You will be invited to attend a meeting at the start of Stage 2 in order to clarify the matters that remain outstanding and obtain a greater understanding of what you hope to achieve by escalating the complaint.

The IDF Complaint Manager will not have been involved in the matters that led to the complaint or the handling of the complaint at Stage 1.

You will be asked to consent to release of records from the doctor. The IDF Complaint Manager will undertake a review of the documentation, any correspondence and the handling of and response to the complaint at Stage 1.

If the review is still in progress after 20 days a letter will be sent to you explaining the delay and a full response made within five days of reaching a conclusion. In any event a holding letter will be sent every 20 days where a

review is continuing. The IDF Complaint Manager will write to you when the review is completed to either confirm the outcome at Stage 1 or to offer an alternative resolution

At this time the IDF will advise you of your right to take the matter further to Stage 3 Independent External Adjudication by the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISACS).

Throughout the process all information, documents and records relevant to your complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information will be divulged to any parties who are not involved in the IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure, unless required to do so by law.

### **Stage 3**

This stage is only available to you if you remain dissatisfied once Stage 1 and Stage 2 are exhausted and aims to bring about a final resolution of the complaint to both parties.

In such a situation you should request the adjudication by writing to the Secretariat:

Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS)  
CEDR (Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution), 3rd Floor  
100 St. Paul's Churchyard  
London  
EC4M 8BU  
Tel: 020 7536 6091  
Email: [info@iscas.org.uk](mailto:info@iscas.org.uk)

This written request for adjudication must be made within six months of the final determination by the IDF at Stage 2. You should provide reasons to explain the dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage 2. ISCAS will acknowledge receipt of the request within three working days

ISCAS will seek confirmation from the IDF that Stage 2 has been completed.

ISCAS will notify the IDF of a request for Stage 3 independent external adjudication. The IDF will respond to requests from ISCAS within ten working days and confirm whether Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.

ISCAS will then be your main contact once adjudication is started. You will be asked to consent to the release of records from the doctor and the IDF

relevant to the complaint. ISCAS will issue the decision within 20 working days or provide a progress update every 20 working days if the decision is delayed. A report will be made to you, the doctor concerned and the IDF.

Additional information for patients about ISCAS can be found at:  
<https://iscas.cedr.com/>

Additional information for patients about the IDF can be found at:  
IDF – [www.idf.co.uk](http://www.idf.co.uk)

## Unacceptable behaviour by complainants

At each stage of the complaints procedure, it might be deemed that a patient's behaviour is unacceptable. We have a policy in place to handle unacceptable behaviour of complainants.

## Our contact details:

### CountryHealth Ltd

23 Green Side, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB25 9HW

**IN AN EMERGENCY: ALWAYS CALL 999 / 112**

### NON-URGENT ENQUIRIES:

via email: [support@countryhealth.co.uk](mailto:support@countryhealth.co.uk) or  
via voicemail: **+44 1449 833 833**

### URGENT ENQUIRIES:

Via WhatsApp on:  
**+44 7771 448 559 Mon - Fri 14:00-18:00**