

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy and Procedure



Purpose

- This policy outlines our commitment to dealing with complaints about the services we provide as an employment business. It also provides information about how we manage, respond to and learn from complaints made about our services.
- Knightingles Healthcare operates an effective mechanism for the receipt, recording, investigation and resolution of all complaints, in order to comply with regulatory guidance and best practice.
- The arrangements for investigation of complaints are fair and transparent.
- Complaints and suggestions from patients, their relatives and key stakeholders are a valued source of information regarding the quality of our service.
- Local Government Ombudsman guidelines are adhered to.

Scope

- Patients
- Relatives.
- Other professionals from outside agencies.
- Clients including NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Private Care Providers and Nursing homes
- Key stakeholders
- All employees.

Policy

- In all cases complaints, concerns and issues shall be treated seriously in a sensitive and confidential manner.
- Complaints and suggestions must be handled in such a way as to first of all reach a satisfactory outcome with the complainant, and to turn a potentially difficult and damaging situation into a source of quality improvement.
- Knightingles Healthcare actively encourages anyone who is not happy with our services or staff to make contact with agency management at the earliest opportunity. Knightingles Healthcare supports the informal and local resolution of concerns and issues so that not all issues escalate to formal complaints. Where issues and concerns cannot be resolved and addressed informally by way of communication and appropriate remedial action then the formal complaint route and response requirements will be followed.
- All informal complaints will be logged using the form in Appendix 1.

However, if despite everything the informal route doesn't resolve the concern or issue, or even if it does but one would still like to make a formal complaint, then the complainant should follow Knightingles Healthcare complaints procedure as described below.

- All formal or serious complaints will be investigated by a person not related to the immediate source of the complaint.
- The recording of complaints will not be confined to "serious" or "substantial"

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complaints. The existence of records for complaints of an apparently minor nature is an indication of the effectiveness of Knittingles Healthcare procedures, the openness of the culture of the organisation and its employees, and their vigilance in the area of abuse, general patient welfare and addressing shortcomings.

- The Director of Operations Laura Van Der Merwe is the appointed complaints manager within the agency and is responsible for dealing with all complaints. Knittingles Healthcare will respond to complaints both by email (where express consent is given by the complainant) and in writing.
- Telephone conversations are not sufficient in themselves, as they do not constitute a proper record consequently any conversations must be followed up in writing confirming what has been agreed
- All complaints will receive an acknowledgement within **24hrs of receipt** with an offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant at a mutually agreed time and to go over:
 - The manner in which the complaint is to be handled
 - The period (response period) within which the investigation of the complaint is likely to be completed.
- Knittingles Healthcare will respond to formal complaints within 15 days for agency only complaints and 25 days for multi-agency complaints.
- However, where the investigation is likely to take longer than the 15 and 25-day period (e.g. where multi-agency statements are involved), the complaints manager will write to the complainant advising them of the delay and the reasons why. They will provide an alternative realistic timeframe for completion and seek agreement from the complainant that this is acceptable.
- Complainants must note that Knittingles Healthcare will not investigate a complaint made no more than **12months after**;
 - The date the event came to the notice of the complainant
 - The date the event occurred or if later
- The time limit will not apply if Knittingles Healthcare is satisfied that;
 - The complainant can give a good reason for not making the complaint within that time limit and
 - Despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly
 - The complaint brings to light serious concerns which warrant investigation remedial action and learning lessons
- The Complaints manager will keep the complainant updated in writing on progress during the investigation.
- Complaints will be recorded in the agencies Complaints Register. A review of all complaints, incidents, suggestions and compliments will be carried out every month.

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- The complaints log sheet will be regularly considered by the Quality and Safety Management Meeting for quality assurance purposes. The Quality and Safety Management Meeting will at each monthly meeting review all complaints since the previous meeting in order to identify trends and matters which may have appeared to be relatively minor at the time, but which indicate a deeper problem.
- The agencies action plans will be updated to include all actions to be taken to resolve any requirements or recommendations made following any complaint investigation and any resultant lessons learnt.
- Compliments will be recorded and made available for all staff to read and also on the personnel file of any member of staff individually complimented.
- Employees who are the subject of a complaint should not communicate directly with the complainant unless accompanied by a senior member of staff or unless requested directly to do so by the complainant.
- Where the complaint gives rise to concerns regarding the wellbeing of one or more patients, serious consideration will be given to suspension of the person or persons complained about, and an investigation must be initiated immediately in order to identify any risk to the health and welfare of the patient involved.
- Knittingles Healthcare shall ensure that in the event of the complaint being against a temporary worker that the temporary worker is fully informed of complaints relating to him. The temporary worker shall be entitled to receive a copy of the complaint referred
- The temporary worker will be afforded the opportunity to state his/her version of events and will be given **seven (7)** days to respond to the Employment Business in writing.
- The client may at any time request that Knittingles Healthcare provide the client with an update as to the progress of the resolution of the complaint
- Where there is evidence of malpractice or the complaint is an event that requires notification, Knittingles Healthcare will immediately notify the CQC, The Police, Protection of Vulnerable Adults or Children, Safeguarding Authority and where applicable alert the temporary workers professional body i.e. NMC.
- Knittingles Healthcare where necessary will immediately exclude the temporary worker from its register whilst an investigation is in progress.
- Knittingles Healthcare undertakes to work with all parties applicable to an investigation and where necessary share findings of such investigations.

Investigations and outcomes will be recorded on the complaints form, adding additional sheets as required.

- All employees are advised that written complaints recording rules must be complied with, and those records held where they are freely available to supervisors and managers. Any attempt to conceal a complaint may give rise to formal disciplinary action.
- Knittingles Healthcare complaints procedure can be accessed publicly via the agencies website at www.knittingleshealthcare.com

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- The procedure is also displayed on our useful documents stand in agency head-office

Written Procedure

A complaint can be made: by telephone; in writing; by email; or in person. All responses will be made/followed up in writing

Complaints can be made to:

The Director of Operations
Knightingles Healthcare
Suite 23 A& B
15 Town Square Chambers
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG11BP

OR Alternatively via email: info@knightingleshealthcare.com

Phone: 01438723209

Complainants have the right to refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if they are unhappy with the outcome of the agencies investigation.

Once a complaint has been fully dealt with by Knightingles Healthcare and the Complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO provides a free, independent service. Complainants can contact the LGO Advice Team for information and advice, or to register one's complaint:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until the provider has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

Final Response Letter

- The Complaints manager will issue a final response letter which will include a report giving:
 - A detailed explanation of how the complaint has been considered;
 - This will include details from a statement provided by any involved clinicians

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- The conclusions reached, including any remedial action needed; and confirmation that any action needed has either already been taken or, if not yet taken, the proposed timescale when such action will be completed.
- The letter will inform the complainants of their right to take their complaint to the LGO if they are not happy with the outcome.

Duty to co-operate

- If a complaint involves more than one provider/NHS Trusts/the local authority, there is a duty on all multi-agencies to co-operate and provide a single response. Knightingles Healthcare will work in collaboration with other key stakeholders to provide a single response.

Complaints not covered by this policy

- A complaint made by an employee regarding their employment. This can be dealt with under Knightingles Healthcare's Grievance Procedure.
- A complaint that was made in person or by telephone and was fully resolved to the complainant's satisfaction no later than the next working day after the day the complaint was made; and
- A complaint that has already been investigated and resolved.
- In these circumstances The Complaints Manager will, as soon as is reasonably practicable, notify the complainant of the decision not to investigate the complaint and the reasons why.

Other Key Complaint Contacts:

The agency is registered by the CQC for provision of domiciliary care and is a member of Hertfordshire Care Providers Association. Complainants may therefore also want to contact the following:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

National Correspondence
Citygate, Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

Tel: 03000 616161

Fax: 03000 616171

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HERTFORDSHIRE CARE PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

Attimore Barn
Ridgeway
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 2AD

Tel: 01707 536020
Email: admin@hcpa.info

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Appendix 1

Note: this form will be used to record expressions of minor concerns which may be dealt with on the spot as well as obvious “complaints” which may require formal investigation. It should also be used to record compliments offered to employees of the organisation.

The original of this form will be:

Held in a clearly labelled “Complaints Register” file Knightingles Healthcare head office whilst the complaint is being investigated.

Re. Person making the complaint, expressing a concern, or giving a compliment

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Name and contact details of the Person to which the complaint refers:

Details of complaint, concern or compliment (include dates, times and witnesses where possible):

Names of any employees specifically complained of or complimented:

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Name of person originally complained to (if not the person completing this form):
Name of the person to whom the complaint was referred on to for investigation (state “as above” if the person who receives the complaint also investigates):
Investigations carried out (attach additional pages if required):

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Action taken or recommended by investigator:	
Did this action satisfy the complainant? If not state why, and who the complaint was referred on to next:	
Action taken by person to whom the complaint was referred on to:	
Did this action satisfy the complainant?	
Name of organisation to which the complaint was referred in the event of a failure to satisfy the complainant:	
Signed by investigating manager signify satisfaction/completion:	
Date:	

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Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Register

Date	Complainant/Compliment	Summary of complaint/suggestion or compliment	Action taken

This register must be referred to each meeting Quality and Safety Management Meeting

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Complaint acknowledgement letter template

[insert date]

[insert name]

[insert address]

Our ref: [insert reference]

Your ref: [insert reference]

Our contact details (email and phone): [insert]

Dear [insert title and name]

Heading, e.g. Complaint about.....

Thank you for bringing to our attention your concerns in [your letter/your email/our conversation] of [date].

I am sorry that you are not happy with the service provided by Knightingles Healthcare Services Limited.

As I understand it, you are concerned that [insert your understanding of the issues of concern, using a bulleted or numbered list if there is more than one point]. Please contact me straight away if I have misunderstood your concerns.

I would be happy to meet you to discuss the issues you have raised and our investigation procedures, if that would be helpful. [Suggest a date and/or provide contact details].

I am looking into the points you have made as a matter of urgency and shall be in touch with you with a full response by [insert anticipated response time – not longer than 15 (if single agency) or 25 (if multi agency) working days].

Please do contact me again in the meantime if I can be of further assistance. My email and phone number are provided above.

Yours Sincerely

Name

Job Title

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Complaint final response letter template

[insert date]

[insert name]

[insert address]

Our ref: [insert reference]

Your ref: [insert reference]

Our contact details (email and phone): [insert]

Dear [insert title and name]

Heading, e.g. Complaint about.....

My investigation into the concerns you raised on [insert date] is now complete.

I will address each of the points as outlined in my earlier acknowledgement letter to you.

[Repeat each individual point of complaint, and follow each one with what you found in the investigation. Put this as a numbered list if there is more than one issue.]

1. Point one, I have found that.....
2. Point two, I have found that...

Outcome

As a result of your complaint we have taken the following action (if not already mentioned above).

1. [action one]
2. [action two]
3. [action three]

I would like to thank you for bringing these matters to our attention. We welcome comments from people who use our services and aim to use these to improve our services.

If you are not fully satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who you can contact at:

Tel: 0300 061 0614, Email: advice@lgo.org.uk, Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Name

Job Title

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Note: All Knittingles Healthcare Policies are reviewed annually, or more frequently as necessary