

COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Policy and Procedure

City Health Federation

Responsible Persons:

Board Lead: Corporate Director

Circumstances may arise or there may be a change in guidance (e.g. NICE or Employment Law) where changes may be required to the policy before the planned review date. Staff are responsible for identifying this to the Manager who will then put in place a policy review process.

NOTE: All policies remain extant until notification of an amended policy is communicated to all staff by the responsible manager.

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INTRODUCTION

City Health Federation (CHF) aims to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with policy and in line with national guidelines. We operate a complaints procedure as part of a NHS services system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of our system are to:

- Enable patients/staff to express comments, suggestions and complaints to CHF when they feel dissatisfied with the service provided.
- Provide patients/staff with an explanation of what has happened, where appropriate, an apology; and an assurance that we have taken steps to prevent the problem recurring, where this is possible

RECEIVING OF COMPLAINTS

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned **Or** you may wish to use our company complaints procedures, we would like you to let us know **as soon as possible** – ideally, within a matter of days or at most a few weeks – because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

- within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem: or
- 12 months from the date on which the event which is the subject of the complaint comes to the complainant's notice.

Complaints should be addressed to the City Health Federation (CHF) Operational Support Manager.

The CHF Operational Support Manager has the discretion to extend the time limits if the complainant has suffered particular distress that prevented them from acting sooner. When considering an extension to the time limit it is important that the Operational Support Manager takes into consideration that the passage of time may prevent an accurate recollection of events by the clinician concerned or by the person bringing the complaint. The collection of evidence, Clinical Guidelines or other resources relating to the time when the complaint arose may also be difficult to establish or obtain. These factors may be considered as suitable reason for declining a time limit extension.

CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO MAKE A COMPLAINT (Services) – Complaints Flowchart

- Any member of the team may find he or she is the first point of contact for someone who wishes to complain. All members of staff should be familiar with the content of the Complaints Procedure leaflet, and copies should be available for you to give to patients.
- Always give the person a copy of the organisations Complaints Procedure leaflet should anyone wish to consider making a complaint, so they are aware of how any complaint will be dealt with.
- Make a detailed and dated note of what the staff member/patient says and your response, if not during the meeting, immediately afterwards.
- Do not offer any explanation at this stage, as the matter has yet to be investigated.
- After the initial contact with any person wishing to make a complaint, if the matter is resolved at this stage, you must send an email to the CHF Operational Support Manager giving details of the complaint and the resolution.
- If a patient wishes to formalise the complaint they can complete the Complaint Form (Appendix 1). This must then be passed on to the CHF Operational Support Manager without delay. Do not investigate the complaint any further yourself, the CHF Operational Support Manager will make contact with the person complaining.
- CHF Operational Support Manager will send a written acknowledgement of receipt of the written complaint within three working days and will include the manner the complaint will be dealt with, the timeframe and their

rights to advocacy. It should also say who is dealing with it (lead organisation) i.e. Subcontractor Organisation Clinical Lead, Service Premises Leads, CHF Operational Support Manager.

- A full investigation will take place with written notes and a log of the progress being made.
- It may be that outside sources will need to be contacted and if that is the case then a consent form (Appendix 3) will need to be signed to make such a request.
- If the complaint relates to clinical care, the clinical member of staff will be provided with a copy of the complaint, by the organisation that has contracted them, to allow them to contribute to the response. Any of the clinicians can access medicolegal advice from their indemnity provider as they see appropriate.

WHAT WE SHALL DO (Appendix 3 Flowchart)

We shall acknowledge the complaint within three working days and aim to have looked into the complaint within twenty working days of the date when it was raised with us, or advise why it is taking longer than this. We shall then be in a position to offer an explanation, or a meeting with the people involved. When we look into the complaint, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible to discuss the problem with those concerned, if this is appropriate;
- make sure an apology is received, where this is appropriate;
- Identify actions/learning to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have his or her permission to do so. The attached Consent Form (Appendix 2) signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness or infirmity) of providing this.

Where the patient is a child, we will receive complaints from:

- Either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child
- A person duly authorised by a local authority to whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989
- A person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation by which the child is being accommodated.

SUBCONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES –All complaints related to services/staff subcontracted from provider organisations **must** be dealt with by the subcontractor, as the lead organisation, following their own organisational policy for dealing with complaints. Any complaints received by CHF pertaining to this will be acknowledged by the CHF Operational Support Manager, consent obtained and then passed to the Subcontractor organisation lead for dealing with complaints. The subcontractor organisation must inform CHF of any complaints received relating to services subcontracted from CHF.

MULTI-AGENCY COMPLAINTS

In any instance whereby the complaint involves more than one subcontractor organisation, City Health Federation will help to co-ordinate with the subcontractor organisations to agree which one organisation will be the lead for the complaint. This lead organisation will then investigate with the support of the other organisations involved and respond to the complainant, following their own complaints process.

NEEDING ASSISTANCE

If you do not feel able to raise your complaint with us **or** you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation, we suggest you might want to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) via 0800 0525 270, or email: WestYorksPALS@nhs.net. They will be able to discuss the complaints procedures with you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality in line with the Information Governance framework. Where the investigation of the complaint requires consideration of the patient's medical records, the Patient Services Lead must inform the patient or the person acting on his/her behalf if the investigation will involve disclosure of information contained in those records to a person other than the service provider.

CHF will keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints, but such records must be kept separate from patients' medical records.

HEALTH COMMISSIONER

If you remain dissatisfied you may ask the Health Commissioner to review your complaint. This should be done within two months of receipt of the final response to your complaint or at the end of the practice complaints procedures. You can contact the Commissioner at NHS England, Customer Contact Centre, PC Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT. Tel: 0300 311 2233 or email: england.contactus@nhs.net.

You may also like to contact the Independent Complaints Advocacy Team (ICAT). ICAT can give you independent help and advice in making a complaint. The telephone number to contact is 01274 750784.

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Compliments, comments and suggestions are valuable, welcome and important. When they are received they will be acknowledged either verbally or in writing and recorded. This enables us to:-

- understand that our service/s are being provided to the users satisfaction
- provide positive feedback to our staff
- influence our organisational and service development
- inform our quality assurance programme

In order to help us to continually improve and develop our services we collect comments and feedback. Patients can complete friends and family test forms for the individual services and we aim to carry out surveys every year

You can also give us feedback:

- in person
- by email: Liz.knowles@bradford.nhs.uk
- by phone: 01274 037932
- by post: 392 Little Horton Lane, Little Horton Lane Medical Centre, Bradford, BD5 0NX

REVIEW / EVALUATION / MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

On a yearly basis the CHF Corporate Director and CHF Operations Manager will review the policy to ensure that is being applied correctly. Any concerns will be reported to the Board.

Appendix 1

Complaint Form

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Contact details:	
Home number:	
Mobile number:	
Email address:	
DOB:	
Are you complaining on behalf of yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes on behalf of myself <input type="checkbox"/> NO on behalf of someone else (Please note that if you are complaining on behalf of someone else we will need to secure their written consent to proceed with an investigation)
If you are complaining on behalf of yourself	

<p>please provide details of your complaint and the specific questions or issues which you wish us to investigate and respond to.</p>	
<p>If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, please complete the following section:</p>	
<p>Patients name:</p>	
<p>Patients address:</p>	

Patients date of birth:	
NHS number (if known):	
Relationship to the patient:	
Contact details for the patient:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
<p>Upon receipt of your completed complaint form, our Operational Support Manager will contact you. This will be to personally discuss your experience, talk about any issues regarding consent, and timescales for responding to you.</p>	

Appendix 2

Consent Form

WHERE THE COMPLAINANT IS NOT THE PATIENT

I [*insert name of patient*] _____ authorise the complaint set out
overleaf to be made on my behalf by [*insert name of complainant*] _____

And I agree that City Health Federation may disclose to [*name of complainant*] _____

(Only in so far as is necessary to answer the complaint) confidential information about me which I provided to
them.

Patient's signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Address: _____
