

Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Everyone has the right to expect a positive experience and a good treatment outcome. In the event of concern or complaint, patients have a right to be listened to and to be treated with respect. Service providers should manage complaints properly so patients' concerns are dealt with appropriately. Good complaint handling matters because it is an important way of ensuring patients receive the service they are entitled to expect. Complaints are a valuable source of feedback; they provide an audit trail and can be an early warning of failures in service delivery. When handled well, complaints provide an opportunity to improve service and reputation.

Aims & Objectives

- We aim to provide a service that meets the needs of our patients and we strive for a high standard of care
- We welcome suggestions from patients and from our staff about the safety and quality of service, treatment and care we provide
- We are committed to an effective and fair complaints system; and
- We support a culture of openness and willingness to learn from incidents, including complaints.

Complaints Policy

- Patients are encouraged to provide suggestions, compliments, concerns and complaints and we offer a range of ways to do it.
- Patients are encouraged to discuss any concerns about treatment and service with Dr Kieren Bong.
- Staff can also use the feedback form to record any concerns and complaints about the quality of service or care to patients.
- All complainants are treated with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality.
- All complaints are handled without prejudice or assumptions about how minor or serious they are. The emphasis is on resolving the problem.
- Patients and staff can make complaints on a confidential basis or anonymously if they wish, and be assured that their identity will be protected.
- Patients and staff will not to be discriminated against or suffer any unjust adverse consequences as a result of making a complaint about standards of care and service.

Managing Complaints

- All staff are expected to encourage patients to provide feedback about the service, including complaints, concerns, suggestions and compliments.
- Staff are expected to attempt resolution of complaints and concerns at the point of service, wherever possible and within the scope of their role and responsibility.

Resolution

The process of resolving the problem will include:

- an expression of regret to the patient for any harm or distress suffered;
- an explanation or information about what is known, without speculating or blaming others; considering the problem and the outcome the consumer is seeking and proposing a solution; and confirming that the patient is satisfied with the proposed solution.

If the Complaint is Not Resolved

Complaints that are not resolved at the point of service, or that are received in writing and require follow up, are regarded as formal complaints.

Our staff refer complaints to Dr Kieren Bong if:

- After attempting to resolve the complaint, they do not feel confident in dealing with the complainant; or
- The outcome the complainant is seeking is beyond the scope of their responsibilities Or;
- They or the complainant believe the matter should be brought to the attention of someone with more authority.

If the complaint is not resolved at the point of service, staff are expected to provide the complainant with the formal complaints policy.

Staff then complete the first two sections of the Complaint Follow Up form and forward it to Dr Bong.

Dr Bong coordinates resolution of formal complaints other staff who are directly involved.

Responsibilities

- Dr Kieren Bong is responsible for coordinating investigation and resolution of formal complaints, conducting risk assessments, liaising with complainants, maintaining a register of complaints and other feedback, providing regular reports on informal and formal complaints, and monitoring the performance of the complaints policy and procedure.
- Dr Kieren Bong is responsible for a proactive approach to receiving feedback from patients and staff.

Dr Kieren Bong is responsible for,

- Ensuring appropriate action is taken to resolve individual complaints;
- Acting on recommendations for improvement arising from complaints;
- Ensuring there is meaningful reporting on trends in complaints;
- Ensuring compliance and review of the complaints management policy;

- Notifications to insurers; and
- Consultation with professional registration boards, and others where necessary.

Clinician and Staff Training

All staff need to have been appropriately trained to manage complaints competently.

The clinic provides training in dispute management, customer service and our complaints management procedures as part of induction and through regular updates. Regular reviews are conducted by Dr Kieren Bong to check understanding of the complaints process among staff.

Promoting Feedback

Information is provided about the complaints policy and external complaints bodies that patients can go to with a complaint, such as Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) in a variety of ways, including;

- On our website;
- Publicity about the service;
- Staff inviting feedback and comments.

Risk Assessment

After receiving a formal complaint, Dr Kieren Bong reviews the issues to decide what action should be taken.

Assessing Resolution Options

Formal complaints are normally resolved by direct negotiation with the complainant, but some complaints are better resolved with the assistance of an alternative disputes resolution provider.

Dr Bong will sign post the complainant to an appropriate external body if;

- There is a serious question about the adequacy and safety him or his staff;
- The complaint is against him who will be responsible for investigating the complaint, resulting in a perception that there is a lack of independence; or
- The complaint raises complex issues that require external expertise.
- The complaint cannot be resolved internally to the patients satisfaction.

Essence Medical Cosmetic Clinic undertakes to signpost patients to **Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)** [Delta House, 50 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2NP; Tel: 0141-2256999 Email: hcis.complaints@nhs.net] in accordance with The Alternative Disputes Resolution Regulations (2015) and undertakes to co-operate and comply with the recommendations made by HIS.

Timeframes

- Formal complaints are acknowledged in writing or in person within 48 hours.
- The acknowledgment provides contact details for the person who is handling the complaint, how the complaint will be dealt with and how long it is expected to take.
- If a complaint raises issues that require notification or consultation with an external body, the notification or consultation will occur within three days of those issues being identified.
- Formal complaints are investigated and resolved within 14 days.
- If the complaint is not resolved within 14 days, the complainant and staff who are directly involved in the complaint will be provided with an update.

Records and Privacy

- Dr Kieren Bong maintains a complaints and patient feedback register with records of informal feedback and formal complaints.
- Personal information in individual complaints is kept confidential and is only made available to those who need it to deal with the complaint.
- Complainants are given notice about how their personal information is likely to be used during the investigation of a complaint.
- Individual complaints files are kept in a secure filing cabinet.
- Patients are provided with access to their medical records in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy. Others requesting access to a patients' medical records as part of resolving a complaint are provided with access only if the patient has provided authorisation.

Open Disclosure and Fairness

- Complainants are initially provided with an explanation of what happened, based on the known facts.
- At the conclusion of an inquiry or investigation, the complainant and staff are provided with all established facts, the causal factors contributing to the incident and any recommendations to improve the service, and the reasons for these decisions.

Investigation and Resolution

Dr Kieren Bong carries out investigations of complaints to identify what happened, the underlying causes of the complaint and preventative strategies. Information is gathered from:

- Talking to staff directly involved;
- Listening to the complainant's views;
- Reviewing medical records and other records; and
- Reviewing relevant policies, standards or guidelines.

Complaints about Individuals

Where an individual staff member has been nominated by a complainant, the matter will be investigated by Dr Bong, who will:

- Inform the staff member of the complaint made against them;
- Ensure no judgement is made against the staff member while an investigation is being carried out;
- Ensure fairness and confidentiality is maintained during the investigation; and
- Encourage the staff member to seek advice from their professional association/body, if desired.

The staff members will be asked to provide a factual report of the incident, identify systems issues that may have contributed to the incident and suggest possible preventive measures.

Reporting and Recording Complaints

Dr Kieren Bong prepares annual reports on the number and type of complaints, the outcomes of complaints, recommendations for change and any subsequent action that has been taken. The reports are provided to staff and if appropriate, uploaded into personal portfolio for audit and appraisal.

Dr Bong periodically prepares case studies using anonymised individual complaints to demonstrate how complaints are resolved and followed up, for the information of staff, and for use in audit and appraisal.

Information about trends in complaints and how individual complaints are resolved is routinely discussed at staff meetings and clinical review meetings as part of reflecting on the performance of the service and opportunities for improvement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Dr Kieren Bong continuously monitors the amount of time taken to resolve complaints, whether recommended changes have been acted on and whether satisfactory outcomes have been achieved.

Dr Bong annually reviews the complaints management system to evaluate if the complaints policy is being complied with and how it measures up against best practice guidelines. As part of the evaluation, patients and staff are asked to comment on their awareness of the policy and how well it works in practice.

References and Further Reading

- Good Medical Practice (GMC,2013)
- The Code; Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (NMC,2012)
- Standards for Dental Practitioners (2013)
- Chartered Institute of Trading Standards
<http://www.tradingstandards.uk/advice/AlternativeDisputeResolution.cfm>

