

A PATIENT'S GUIDE

**MAKING COMMENTS
AND COMPLAINTS**

Introduction

HCA Healthcare UK is committed to delivering safe, high-quality, cost-effective healthcare. We will do our best to ensure the time you spend in our hospitals is as comfortable as possible and to provide you with excellent personal and professional care, but there may be times when your expectations are not met. We therefore appreciate all feedback regarding the care and service that you, your family or others experienced during your visit and this leaflet explains how we deal with concerns or complaints you may wish to raise.

Patient satisfaction questionnaire

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we encourage our patients to provide feedback so that we can take into account your views and priorities and one way to do this is via our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaires.

We provide these Questionnaires to all inpatients and day-patients treated in our facilities. The feedback received from the surveys remains anonymous and is

reviewed monthly, as well as quarterly, and this information is shared throughout the organisation to help inform how we can improve.

We will respond to any concerns considerately, quickly and as effectively as possible. All comments and complaints are always taken seriously, regardless of their nature: such as medical, nursing, our accommodation, food or administration.

Other ways of raising an issue or concern

We hope you find your stay at our facilities to be comfortable and that you do not have any concerns about the care you receive. If you do encounter any problems, however small, we ask that you let us know as soon as possible. Please highlight any concerns as soon as they arise to a member of staff, rather than waiting, so that we can try and resolve these in a timely fashion. You can provide feedback as follows:

During your stay in hospital

Each area has a manager: please ask to speak to them directly as they will always be happy to help; or ask to see the senior person on duty.

On your discharge from hospital

As previously outlined, you also have the opportunity to complete our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire. Each questionnaire is reviewed and action is taken as required by each of our hospitals/clinics.

After your discharge from hospital

Please write to the hospital's Chief Executive Officer of the relevant facility. The hospital's address details can be found on the HCA UK website.

The complaints process

There may be occasions when you wish to express your concerns/complaint in writing. HCA UK's complaints policy ensures your concerns are investigated and that you are given a full reply. This guide outlines our patient complaints procedure.

Any complaint that we receive is treated in confidence. We undertake to investigate all complaints courteously and sympathetically and to provide a response within recognised timelines.

What are the first steps?

Before making a complaint, it is important to establish what you may want to achieve.

Under our complaints policy, we can:

- Carry out an investigation and offer an explanation for what happened
- Take steps to help put the matters right and reassure you that we have done so.

Our complaints procedure has three stages and involves the following people and/or organisations:

1. LOCAL RESOLUTION

Your complaint will be handled and responded to by the local HCA UK hospital's senior management team/Chief Executive Officer.

2. INTERNAL REVIEW

Your complaint will be reviewed by the HCA UK Group Chief Executive.

3. INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL ADJUDICATION

HCA UK is a subscriber member of the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS) who can undertake an external independent review of your complaint on your behalf.

What happens if I make a verbal complaint?

If you make a verbal complaint to a member of staff, it is a good idea to make a note of when you did this and who you spoke to. The department manager/

staff member will attempt to resolve your complaint immediately and if this is not possible, the complaint will be further investigated.

How do I make a written complaint?

It is helpful to put all formal complaints in writing.

Your letter should include:

- Who or what has caused your concerns
- Where and when the events took place
- What action you have already taken, if any
- What outcome you want from your complaint.

The hospital's Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge your complaint letter within three working days of receipt, unless a full reply can be sent within five working days of receiving it. All complaints are taken seriously and are handled openly and honestly in a bid to be fair to all concerned and to conclude matters to the satisfaction of all parties as soon as practically possible. All documentation will be forwarded to the hospital's manager handling your complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring your complaint is investigated fully and the hospital will write to you with the outcome within 20 working days. Should our investigation take longer, we will keep you informed, and you will receive a letter explaining the reason for the delay every 20 working days until the matter is resolved.

As part of investigating your complaint, the Chief Executive Officer or a senior manager may offer to meet with you (or to have a call) to help ensure we fully understand the issues you have raised and your desired outcome. After the meeting, if no further action is proposed, the hospital will send you a full written response.

What happens if I am not happy with the response?

Our aim is to deal with your complaint as quickly as possible at a hospital level. If you are not satisfied with our response, please do inform the hospital's Chief Executive Officer outlining why and they will try to resolve your outstanding concerns and reach a satisfactory conclusion for you.

It is always our intention to resolve complaints, but if you remain dissatisfied with the hospital's response, you can ask for an internal review as part of stage 2 of our complaints process.

What does an internal review involve?

The internal review (stage 2) is the responsibility of the Group Chief Executive Officer of HCA Healthcare UK. Please write to:

HCA Healthcare UK
Group Chief Executive Officer
2 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0PU

If you are dissatisfied with the hospital's response, you can write to the Group Chief Executive Officer at the address above. You will need to do this within six months of the date of the final local written stage 1 response from the hospital's Chief Executive Officer.

You will receive an acknowledgment of the stage 2 review within three working days of receipt (unless a full reply can be sent within five working days). The Group Chief Executive Officer will ensure a comprehensive review is completed of your complaint. This will include a review of the correspondence and handling of the concerns you have raised at a hospital level. You may also be offered a meeting (or a call) to help us in resolving your concerns. This review will either confirm the decisions and actions taken by the hospital's Chief Executive Officer or offer an alternative solution.

You will receive a full response within 20 working days from the receipt of your request for an internal review. Should our investigation take longer, we will keep you informed, and you will receive a letter explaining the reason for the delay every 20 working days until the matter is resolved.

What happens if I'm still unhappy?

If you remain dissatisfied following the completion of the internal review of your complaint, you can request an independent external adjudication by the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS).

You can request an independent adjudication of HCA Healthcare UK's decision by writing to:

**Independent Sector Complaints
Adjudication Service
70 Fleet Street
London EC4Y 1EU**

www.iscas.org.uk

Tel: **020 7536 6091**

Email: **info@iscas.org.uk**

You will need to write to the ISCAS Secretariat within six months of the final decision of our internal review. You will need to clarify in writing which aspects of your complaint you wish to refer to adjudication and give your consent to the ISCAS process and the release of any relevant case and clinical records. The Secretariat will then inform us of your request for adjudication, and we will then send all the relevant information to the Secretariat as requested.

You will not have to pay a fee for this service as the costs are met by HCA Healthcare UK's ISCAS membership.

The ISCAS will confirm with us that your complaint has completed stages 1 and 2 and then will request clarification from you that you are willing to agree to the terms of the ISCAS. The ISCAS will appoint a Principal Adjudicator, who is independent of the ISCAS and its membership, and who will agree the key points of your complaint with you.

They will provide a written acknowledgement to complainants of their request for independent external adjudication within three working days of receipt of the request.

The ISCAS will keep you updated on the progress of the adjudication of your complaint and will do this, at a minimum, every 20 working days.

The adjudication process is intended to bring about a final resolution of the complaint for both parties. It is important that you understand the binding nature of the adjudication process:

- The finality of the decision by the adjudicator
- Any decision and/or goodwill gesture awarded by the adjudicator brings the complaint process to a close.

The Independent Adjudicator will consider a wide range of remedies, including asking the ISCAS provider member:

- to provide an explanation and apology, where appropriate
- to take action to put things right
- to share details of how the organisation has learnt from the complaint and any changes made as a result
- to offer a goodwill payment in recognition of shortfalls in complaint handling, inconvenience, distress, or any combination of these, up to a limit of £5,000. Please note that any goodwill payment awarded by the Independent External Adjudicator should take account of any claim that the ISCAS member has against the complainant (e.g. for unpaid hospital fees).

Where any aspect of your complaint might give rise to a clinical negligence claim, your right to seek independent legal advice remains.

Questions

If you have any questions about the HCA Healthcare UK Complaints Policy, please contact the Chief Executive Officer at the relevant hospital.

Address details can be found on the HCA UK website: [hcahealthcare.co.uk](https://www.hcahealthcare.co.uk)

