

Professional Support Unit

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Statement

This document sets out the Professional Support Unit (PSU) policy and procedure for responding to complaints.

The aim is to deal with complaints in a sensitive, efficient and timely manner and to learn lessons from complaints and ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

Care will be taken in relation to information disclosed to ensure that it is relevant, necessary to deal with the complaint, and disclosed on a need to know basis.

This policy is focused on resolving complaints and learning lessons to develop the service and not with attributing blame to individuals. In the event that serious issues arise from a complaint in relation to individuals, these are referred to the disciplinary procedure.

2. Scope

This policy covers individual users of services provided by the PSU and is restricted to complaints not covered by other specialised complaints and appeals procedures such as those for recruitment and assessment in medical and dental training programmes.

Complaints may concern the delivery of our services including administration, communication, the service provided by our staff, access to information and other matters connected with our provision of services.

3. PSU Mission and Vision

Mission

The Professional Support Unit (PSU) is tasked with providing support for the professional development of the following clinicians in London and South East:

- Healthcare professionals between Bands 5 to 8 in a recognised training scheme such as nurse preceptorship or development for more specialised clinical roles
- Postgraduate Doctors and Dentists who hold a London / KSS training number (Foundation years until CCT)
- London doctors who have completed and passed the entry requirements and have been offered a placement on the London Inducting, Returning and Retaining the Workforce schemes

Vision

We value a high quality, safe and empathic service for patients and this guides our responses and actions in our work with clients

4. Legal Responsibilities

Lead Postgraduate Dean for Professional Development will be notified immediately if it appears that a serious or criminal offence has been committed. The Lead Postgraduate Dean will decide on appropriate action including the involvement of the Police or other external bodies.

This complaints procedure will cease if a letter from you or your legal representative is received stating that legal action is being taken. You will be advised in writing that the complaints procedure has been brought to an end. However the investigation into the circumstances of the complaint will continue through an appropriate mechanism to hopefully enable an amicable conclusion for all parties concerned.

5. PSU principles

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. Many complaints and misunderstandings can be resolved satisfactorily by an understanding and speedy response. Immediate personal attention by staff can often reassure a complainant by providing an explanation and an offer of immediate help, which in turn can remove any sense of grievance.

Any member of PSU staff may find that he or she is the first point of contact for someone who wishes to make a complaint. As part of their training and induction, all members of staff are familiar with this complaints procedure.

Any staff member receiving a verbal complaint will:-

- speak professionally to the complainant
- make it clear that he/she will deal with the complaint
- indicate that confidentiality will be respected
- listen carefully and make a detailed and dated note of what the complainant says, and the staff member's response
- direct the complainant to the appropriate appeals policy if appropriate
- offer an explanation and/or apology if possible

6. Procedure

6.1 Stage 1

The PSU encourages resolution of complaints in an informal way with the individual or team involved. Initially discussions should be undertaken to resolve the issue, however if the complaint cannot be resolved informally, details of the complaint must be submitted in writing (by letter or email).

E-mail address: psu@nwl.hee.nhs.uk

All letters should be addressed to:

Professional Support Unit Complaints

2nd Floor Stewart House

32 Russell Square

London

WC1B 5DN

A written acknowledgement of receipt will be issued within 2 working days.

The acknowledgement will explain that your complaint will be investigated and replied to within **20 working days from receipt of the complaint**.

Your complaint will be passed to the PSU Administrative Team Leader (or nominated deputy)

who is the person responsible for overseeing the investigation and responding to your complaint. The Head of Professional Development will be informed of all complaints and consulted in relation to the investigation and response.

If we are not able to reply in full within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint, an explanation as to why further time is required to investigate, together with a proposed timescale will be communicated to you.

A brief summary of the written complaint received is logged onto the PSU Register of Complaints. This log also details the action taken in response to each complaint, and lessons learned. Anonymity will be protected for any reporting purposes and access to the log is restricted to those PSU staff required to be involved in the process.

The Administrative Team leader will provide a quarterly report to the PSU Team meeting. The PSU Team will review the report and discuss any actions to be taken to address issues which have been identified as requiring improvement.

6.2 Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the response, you should submit a further letter detailing the reasons why, within 10 days of the date of the letter. Your letter will be referred to the Lead Postgraduate Dean for Professional Development who will review your complaint and respond within 10 working days of receipt of your letter. A written acknowledgement of receipt of your final stage letter will be sent out to you within 2 working days.

The review and response by the Director and Dean for Education and Quality is the final stage and no further appeal is allowed.

7 Equality and Diversity

Health Education England is committed to providing equality of opportunity, not only in its education and training but also in the services for which it is responsible. As such, this policy has been screened and assessed and no potential discriminatory impact has been identified.

8 Monitoring and Compliance with this Procedure

The effectiveness of the procedure will be reviewed on a regular basis by the PSU Administrative Team Leader (or nominee).