

Cosmedicare

St. Ellen's Hospitals

Caring for you

# Policy

Feedback and Complaints

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## Cosmedicare / St Ellen's Feedback and Complaints Procedure

**We are committed to providing high-quality care delivered with compassion, respect and a human touch.**

We aim to provide you with the highest quality of care possible. We welcome all forms of feedback and use it to improve services. Good feedback can help to identify areas of best practice. Negative feedback can help to identify areas of concern. It also ensures that action is taken so that the same problems do not happen again.

When receiving services or care, you or any of your relatives or other representatives can:

- give feedback;
- make comments;
- raise concerns;
- make a complaint.

We realise you may want to raise a concern or make a complaint. Our approach to complaints aims to “get it right first time” through a quick, effective complaints handling process that supports you to achieve resolution.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to continuously improve our services. They provide us with feedback about using our services at Cosmedicare / St Ellen's Private Hospitals. We thank you for taking the time to help us to identify areas of concern, achieve resolution wherever possible and take action so that the same problems do not happen again.

**Whenever the care we provide can be improved, we will listen and act.**

We pride ourselves in our approach to complaints which ensures you are treated respectfully and remain at the heart of the process. It is also important that we actively monitor, take action and share learning from the complaints we receive.

### What is a complaint?

Cosmedicare / St Ellen's definition of a complaint is:

“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of Cosmedicare / St Ellen's.”

## How do I give feedback or make a complaint?

You can complain in person at the place where you have received care, treatment or advice, or where the incident that you want to complain about happened. You can also complain by phone, in writing and by email to [enquiries@cosmedicare.uk](mailto:enquiries@cosmedicare.uk) or to our dedicated complaints inbox [complaints@stellenshospital.com](mailto:complaints@stellenshospital.com).

Wherever possible we encourage you to speak with a member of staff. It's easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. They will always try to resolve any problems on the spot if it is possible to do so.

If you can't or you do not wish to do this, you can ask to speak to:

- a clinic manager;
- a senior member of staff; or
- the Complaints Manager.

If you prefer to complain in writing rather than in person or over the phone, you can send a letter or an email to the Complaints Manager at [Complaints@StEllensHospital.com](mailto:Complaints@StEllensHospital.com).

We understand that you may feel frustrated or upset and want to feed that back to us. Please consider we have a duty of care to our staff, as well as our clients, therefore we ask you to be respectful to those people on the receiving end of your concerns or complaint. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our process. When this happens we have to take action to protect our staff. We also consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. This policy explains how we will approach these situations.

We are committed to ensuring equal access to our feedback and complaints procedure and can assist with help with interpretation and translation or other specific needs. We will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act (2010) and can signpost you to support or advocacy services.

## Our Feedback and Complaints Handling Procedure has two stages

Unless otherwise stated, all references to "days" in this procedure mean working days and exclude weekends and public holidays.

### Stage One – Early Resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. Where appropriate, this could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

Sometimes we will have to make some enquiries before we can respond to your complaint. We will give you our decision at Stage One in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we cannot resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to Stage Two. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

## Stage Two – Investigation (including complaint clarification where required)

Stage Two deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage One and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

To help us investigate your complaint fairly and thoroughly, we may first need to clarify the exact issues you want us to investigate. These are referred to as the *heads of complaint*.

Heads of complaint are the specific concerns, issues or allegations that you would like us to investigate and respond to.

For straightforward complaints, we may confirm the heads of complaint within our initial acknowledgement.

For more detailed or complex complaints, we may need time to review the information you have provided before confirming the heads of complaint. In these cases, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and aim to write to you within five working days to confirm the proposed heads of complaint for your agreement.

The formal investigation stage will begin once the heads of complaint have been agreed by both you and Cosmedicare / St Ellen's. The 20 working day investigation timescale will commence from the date that agreement is reached.

At the Investigation stage we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days and, where possible, confirm the heads of complaint to be investigated;
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for; and
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

## Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by you or someone representing you. We will accept complaints brought by third parties such as a friend, relative or an advocate as long as you have authorised the person to act on your behalf and provided your consent.

We are committed to making our services easy to use for all members of the community. We will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you to access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

## What information should I include in my complaint?

When complaining, you should give:

- your full name and address (and the patient's full name and address if you are complaining for them);
- as much helpful information as possible about what happened, where it happened and when;
- information about how you want the matter to be resolved;
- your phone number, if you are happy to provide it, so that you can be contacted to discuss your complaint.

Giving this information will help clearly identify the problem and what needs to be done to resolve things.

If you're complaining on behalf of another competent adult, you may need proof (consent) that you can act on behalf of them. Whether you need to do this will depend on the circumstances.

For complex complaints, we may summarise the main issues you have raised and ask you to confirm that these accurately reflect your concerns before our formal investigation begins.

## What issues can I complain about?

A complaint may relate to:

- care and/or treatment in respect of our medical/clinical service;
- delays;
- inadequate standard of service;
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff;
- environmental or domestic issues;
- operational and procedural issues;
- a failure to follow the appropriate process;
- lack of information and clarity about services; and
- difficulty in making contact with Cosmedicare / St Ellen's for appointments or queries.

This list does not cover everything.

## What can't I complain about?

Not all issues may be for Cosmedicare / St Ellen's to resolve. The feedback and complaints procedure does not apply to the following complaints:

- a complaint raised by one private healthcare provider about another private healthcare provider;
- a complaint raised by an employee of Cosmedicare / St Ellen's about any matter relating to that employee's contract of employment;
- a complaint which is being or has already been investigated by the independent complaints review service;
- a complaint arising out of an alleged failure to comply with a request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002(a);
- a complaint about which the person making the complaint has commenced legal proceedings (whether or not these have concluded), or where Cosmedicare / St Ellen's reasonably considers that legal proceedings are so likely that it would not be appropriate to investigate the complaint under this procedure; and
- a complaint, the subject matter of which has previously been investigated and responded to by Cosmedicare / St Ellen's.

Additionally, this feedback and complaints procedure should not be used in the following circumstances:

- to consider a routine first-time request for a service;
- a request for a second opinion in respect of care or treatment;
- matters relating to NHS care or treatment;
- matters relating to services not provided by Cosmedicare / St Ellen's.

Staff will signpost you to the most appropriate organisation to manage these issues.

### How long have I got to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within 6 months of the event you want to complain about, or within 6 months of finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

However, if you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please speak to the person dealing with it to explain why. A complaint can sometimes be accepted after the time limit.

You can complain to the **Independent Complaints Reviewer** about our decision not to accept your complaint by emailing [help@siasorg.com](mailto:help@siasorg.com)

### What should I expect to happen after I complain?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. When making a complaint or raising a concern you can expect:

- it to be dealt with efficiently and be properly investigated;
- a full explanation into how it has been investigated;
- to be told what action has been or will be taken as a result;
- an apology if a mistake has occurred;
- your complaint and learning is used to improve services.

### When will I be given a response to my complaint?

At the Early Resolution stage (Stage One) of our procedure we will give you our decision in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

At the Investigation Stage (Stage Two), staff will provide a full response within 20 working days of the heads of complaint being agreed. For complex complaints, we may first need to clarify and agree the heads of complaint with you before the investigation formally begins. This response should:

- show that staff have looked into your complaint;
- reply to all the points you made;
- offer you an apology if things have gone wrong;
- explain what action has been taken or will be taken to stop what you complained about happening again;
- if necessary, explain why Cosmedicare / St Ellens cannot do anything more about some parts of your complaint;
- offer you the chance to talk to a member of staff if there is anything in the letter you don't understand.

In some cases, we may need more time to give you a full response and may not be able to keep to these times. If this happens, staff will let you know and tell you why.

## What if I am unhappy about your decision or the way Cosmedicare / St Ellen's has handled my complaint?

If we have fully investigated your complaint and you're unhappy with our response, or the way we handled your complaint, you can ask the **Independent Complaints Reviewer** to look at it.

The Independent Complaints Reviewer can't normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our feedback and complaints procedure;
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than 12 months ago;
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

## Information about the Independent Complaints Reviewer

The Independent Complaints Reviewer is the final stage of independent review about Cosmedicare / St Ellen's Hospital. If you remain dissatisfied with Cosmedicare / St Ellen's after its feedback and complaints procedure has concluded, you can ask the Independent Complaints Reviewer to look at your complaint. They cannot normally look at complaints:

- where you have not gone all the way through Cosmedicare / St Ellen's feedback and complaints procedure;
- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

The Independent Complaints Reviewer contact details are: [help@siasorg.com](mailto:help@siasorg.com)

The Independent Complaints Reviewer provides an impartial review of how your complaint has been handled, including whether the process was fair, thorough and followed correctly. To protect the independence and integrity of the review process, the reviewer is identified by role rather than by name, and all communications are managed through the Scottish Independent Adjudication Service (SIAS).

The Independent Complaints Reviewer does not normally consider matters relating to clinical decision-making, professional clinical judgement or legal disputes, as these fall outside the scope of this complaints process.

## Information about Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the independent regulator for St Ellen's Private Hospitals. They oversee the quality and safety of independent healthcare services in Scotland.

We encourage patients to complete our complaints procedure before seeking external review wherever appropriate. However, you may also contact Healthcare Improvement Scotland at any stage if you have concerns about patient safety, quality of care or regulatory standards.

Contact details for Healthcare Improvement Scotland are: [www.HealthcareImprovementScotland.scot](http://www.HealthcareImprovementScotland.scot) and email [HIS.IHCregulation@nhs.scot](mailto:HIS.IHCregulation@nhs.scot).

## Can I ask for financial compensation?

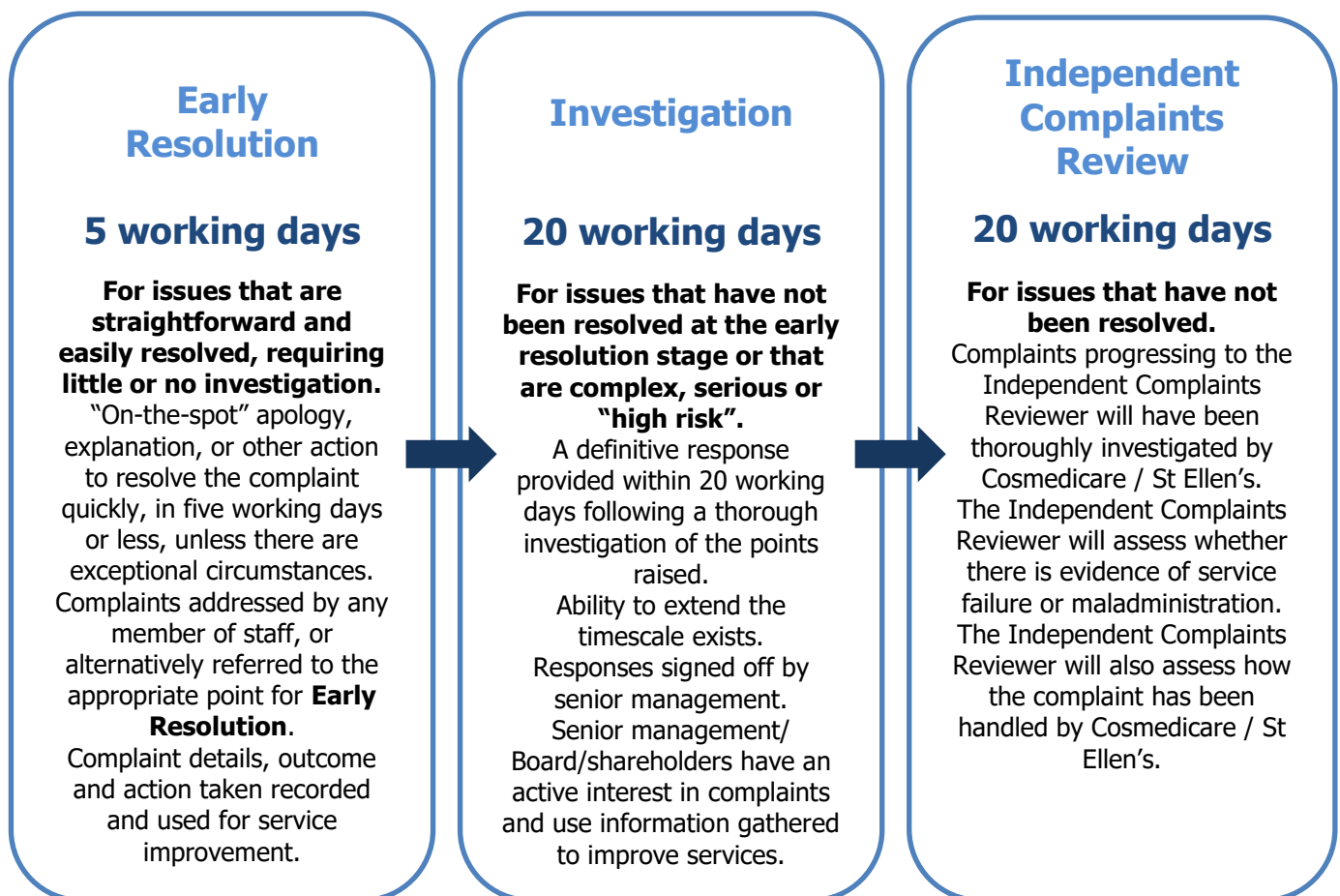
This feedback and complaints procedure does not normally provide for financial compensation. An independent, legal professional may be able to advise anyone who is seeking compensation where to get information about specialist solicitors who handle medical negligence claims.

## Cosmedicare / St Ellen's Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Our feedback and complaints procedure aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for resolving complaints early and locally by capable, well-trained staff.

Our feedback and complaints procedure provides two opportunities to resolve complaints internally:

- early resolution; and
- investigation.



For clarity, the term "early resolution" refers to the first stage of the complaints handling procedure. It does not reflect any job description or role within Cosmedicare / St Ellen's but means seeking to resolve complaints at the initial point of contact where possible.

## Document Control

### A. Confidentiality Notice

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### B. Document Details

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### C. Document Revision and Approval History

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| 1       | 18/01/2024 | Senior Mgmt. Team  | Managing Director  | First Issue  |
| 2       | 27/11/2024 | Senior Mgmt. Team with amendments made by Compliance Manager | Managing Director  | HIS information added regarding patient right to contact and including HIS contact details.  |
| 3       | 27/02/2025 | Senior Mgmt. Team with amendments made by Compliance Manager | Managing Director  | Revision of contact email address for the Independent Complaints Reviewer.   |
| 4       | 03/04/2025 | Senior Mgmt. Team with amendments made by Compliance Manager | Managing Director  | Revision of contact email address for Complaints Manager.  |
| 5       | 02/07/2025 | Senior Mgmt. Team with amendments made by Compliance Manager | Managing Director and Quality and Service Improvement Director | Comprehensive policy update including complaint clarification stage, heads of complaint process, revised ICR arrangements, updated HIS guidance, improved patient-facing wording, and enhanced complaint investigation transparency. |