

MANAGING COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Contents:

- 1. Policy Statement**
 - 2. Definition**
 - 3. Scope**
 - 4. Aims**
 - 5. Roles and Responsibilities**
 - 6. Complaints procedure**
 - 7. Response Times**
 - 8. Escalation process**
 - 9. Duty of Candour**
 - 10. Learning from Complaints**
 - 11. Quality Assurance & Monitoring**
 - 12. Policy Review**
 - 13. Appendices Reflective statement and guidance notes**
- NMC guidance – Duty of Candour**

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

SOS Medical values the opinion and feedback of its employees, candidates and clients and is committed to improving service quality in response to feedback, suggestions, complaints or service issues.

Although the bulk of service issues are raised and dealt with operationally on a day-to-day basis, there may be occasions when a particular issue needs to be raised and handled formally.

SOS Medical operates a transparent and accessible operational structure, ensuring that senior management and the directors are available, when required, to all parties.

We believe that our customer service is what differentiates us from our competitors, and as such we are continuously seeking ways to improve the service that we give to both our clients and candidates.

2.0 DEFINITION

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either in writing or verbally about the healthcare/treatment or services provided which requires an investigation and formal response

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of the company's service, policies and procedures. All employees are required to comply with this policy when dealing with complaints and if required, complaint escalation.

All staff have a responsibility to read this policy and understand its impact on their area of work. Staff should be able to respond appropriately to a complainant and endeavour to achieve immediate resolution. If this is not possible, all staff have the responsibility to escalate the concern/complaint in accordance with this policy

4.0 AIMS

This policy aims to ensure all complaints are well managed in accordance with timelines given to Clients and in a transparent manner, ensuring adherence to regulatory body requirements. These are:

Section 1 – Standard 8 of DHSSPS Minimum standards for Nursing Agencies –

“Standard 8: All complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively.”

and

CQC Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints (Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that people can make a complaint about their care and treatment. To meet this regulation providers must have an effective and accessible system for identifying, receiving, handling and responding to complaints from people using the service, people acting on their behalf or other stakeholders. All complaints must be investigated thoroughly and any necessary action taken where failures have been identified.”

This policy also aims to promote an approach that ensures the Complainant has confidence and support that their issues are important to SOS Medical.

5.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGERS – Clinical and Non-Clinical

SOS Medical Staffing will adhere to the responsibilities set out by the DHSSPS Minimum standards within their role.

All managers expected to manage complaints are trained in the application of the complaints procedure and must undergo Complaints training and appropriate refresher courses.

Standard 8.11: The registered provider co-operates with any complaints investigation carried out by the HSC Trust, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority or the NI Commissioner for Complaints.

Standard 8.14: When required, a summary of all complaints, outcomes and actions taken is made available to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority.

Standard 8.15: Information from complaints is used to improve the quality of services.

Managers will also provide a supporting role to staff involved in a complaint. Whilst staff are advised of SOS Medical Staffing’s expectations when a complaint is received, they will be supported through the complaints procedure to perform in an open and non-defensive manner.

STAFF

All staff are expected to cooperate with requests for information when a complaint arises.

Staff will be notified immediately a complaint arises and a request for a reflective statement will be sent alongside guidelines on how to complete the statement.

Being the subject of a complaint can be stressful and SOS Medical Staffing is committed to ensuring staff are adequately supported.

All staff members who are the subject of a complaint should be advised to seek support and advice when required from the Nurse Manager, in the first instance who can sign post staff members to other services if necessary.

Appendix 1: Reflective Statement. Further information and guidance can be found on the RCN website www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/statements.

SOS Medical Staffing's Nurse Manager is also on hand for advice and guidance for staff who are required to give a statement following a complaint and will support the staff member throughout the investigation.

It is important to understand, as stated in Guidelines for Practice 2018, *“It is rare for clinicians to receive no complaints at all—most get a few, and negative feedback should be seen as an opportunity to develop, not ruin, a medical career. It is important to understand that people can respond individually to trauma in a way that leads to increased personal resilience and even growth, and so descent into low mood and professional dysfunction after a complaint is not inevitable.”*

6.0 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This structure allows decisions requiring executive level input to take place quickly and efficiently, streamlining the service to our Clients and Candidates.

All complaints and service issues will be thoroughly investigated and documented with all parties involved.

Clear and accurate communication is central to effective resolution.

Client complaints:

Complaints should be made in writing to Complaints@SOSmedical.co.uk

Upon receipt of a complaint from a client, the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 business days of receipt along with a copy of the complaint's procedure attached.

An investigation will be commenced by SOS Medical Staffing immediately.

The member of staff will receive a copy of the complaint for response purposes.

The complaint will be entered in the complaints register.

The complaints team will investigate the complaint, if necessary with support from the SMT, and interview individual parties as appropriate.

Written statements of events will be obtained from those interviewed, a template is available for responses from staff members alongside recommendations on how it should be completed. Once statements are received a summary report will be written.

Action to resolve the complaint will be recorded and where appropriate, incorporated as part of our standard processes and procedures to prevent re-occurrence and improve service.

In every case SOS Medical Staffing will take all reasonable and practicable steps to resolve the complaint within 15 business days of its receipt, unless the nature of the complaint requires additional investigation or action by an appropriate third party, in which case the

complaint will be made good or resolved as soon as possible thereafter. In this situation the complaint will be reviewed and managed as required and the Client updated.

During the complaints resolution process we will ensure that both the Contracting Authority and the Complainant are kept informed of progress in making good or resolving the complaint and on resolution, details of the complaint, actions and procedures put in place to prevent recurrence will be provided to all parties in writing.

Staff complaints:

Staff can complain about their own care and treatment.

However, issues that relate to management issues, grievances or concerns over health and social care practice should be addressed under the appropriate established policy and cannot be investigated under the complaints procedure.

In the case of staff complaining about an incident on an assignment, in the first instance staff must submit their concerns in writing to the Nurse Manager.

7.0 Response times:

Response times will be as follows:

- Investigation will commence immediately with an assessment of the situation and contact with all individuals involved.
- Interviews will be held within 48 working hours unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- A response will be made to the complainant within 48 hours of completing interviews.

We maintain a written log of all complaints which include details of the complaint, actions taken to resolve it and any changes to procedures to prevent recurrence.

8.0 Escalation Process

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with any aspect of the handling of their complaint or the outcome they should contact the Complaints Manager, by outlining the details in full, to:

The Complaints Manager

SOS Medical Staffing Ltd

Milton House,

240a Broadway,

Bexleyheath,

Kent DA6 8AS

The complaint will then be investigated by the Complaints Manager, who will propose a suggested course of action.

The Complaints Manager will continue to review the outcome of the complaint at agreed times for a minimum period of 12 months.

9.0 Duty of Candour

All healthcare professionals are bound by the Duty of Candour Regulation 20 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activity) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 27th November 2014.

This means every healthcare professional must be open and honest with patients or people in their care. When things go wrong, patients or people in their care should expect a face to face explanation and apology from the caregiver or healthcare provider.

Candour is defined by Robert Francis as:

“The volunteering of all relevant information to persons who have or may have been harmed by the provision of services, whether or not the information has been requested and whether or not a complaint or a report about that provision has been made”

SOS Medical Staffing ensures there is clear, strong organisational support for staff to follow their ethical responsibility in being open and honest with those in their care.

In July 2015 The NMC and GMC published guidance that sets out standards expected of all nurses, midwives and doctors practising in the UK. (Appendix 2)

Any staff members who are concerned about the non-reporting or concealment of incidents, or about on-going practices which present a serious risk to patient safety, must inform the Nurse Manager.

10.0 Learning from Complaints

“Standard 8.15: Information from complaints is used to improve the quality of services”

All complaints offer the opportunity for SOS Medical Staffing and its employees to learn and improve the quality of service provided. It is important that all complaints, even those that are considered not upheld are shared and we learn from them. Any items identified should receive an action plan.

Any learning and actions identified following the investigation will be included onto the Complaints Management Document and an action plan devised, where appropriate.

11.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE & MONITORING

Complaints will be reviewed at the Senior Management Team meeting monthly, and analysed on a quarterly and annual basis to identify any trends or patterns and this will form part of management reporting and be an agenda point for discussion at review meetings.

12.0 POLICY REVIEW

This procedure will be reviewed regularly and may be altered from time to time in light of legislative changes or other prevailing circumstances.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Reflective Statement of Events Form

Nurse Name:	
Position:	Nurse
Client Name:	
Ward Name	
Date of Event:	
Complaint Description/Details of Allegations	
Description of Incident / Complaint (Please provide witness statements where applicable, photocopies of drug charts & bed numbers to help resolve complaints asap).	

Account of Events and Details of your involvement in the events being investigated

Give a clear account of how you were involved, state the sequence of events, give dates and times, only include factual knowledge, give reasons for your actions and If you report conversation use direct speech e.g. Nurse Collins said "I saw him fall." Also include your observations, do not abbreviate.

Experience

Include how long you have been qualified; working in the speciality and types of experience you have gained.

Other persons present

Give names and roles where you can.

Background factors

Give factual details of any background factors that may be relevant, e.g. staff shortages, dependency of patients.

Records made

Indicate any written records made by you, e.g. clinical notes, incident form, training notes.

Any other relevant information

Give any other information you feel is relevant but not covered above.

Declaration

I hereby confirm that I have completed the above statement to the best of my knowledge. I understand that by completing this form and returning to SOS Medical, by post or email, I am giving my consent for the statement to be shared with relevant 3rd parties for investigation purposes.

Name:

Date Statement Completed:

Appendix 2.

NMC “Duty of Candour”

The professional duty of candour

Every healthcare professional must be open and honest with patients when something that goes wrong with their treatment or care causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress. This means that healthcare professionals must:

- tell the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient’s advocate, carer or family) when something has gone wrong
- apologise to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient’s advocate, carer or family)
- offer an appropriate remedy or support to put matters right (if possible)
- explain fully to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient’s advocate, carer or family) the short and long term effects of what has happened.

Healthcare professionals must also be open and honest with their colleagues, employers and relevant organisations, and take part in reviews and investigations when requested. They must also be open and honest with their regulators, raising concerns where appropriate. They must support and encourage each other to be open and honest, and not stop someone from raising concerns.

References & Links

<https://www.guidelinesinpractice.co.uk/non-clinical-best-practice/learning-from-a-complaint-advice-for-individuals-and-organisations>

CQC Link <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-16-receiving-acting-complaints>

RQIA Link [Microsoft Word - HSC Complaints Complaints in HSC Standards and Guidelines for Resolution & Learning 26 July 2010.DOC \(rqia.org.uk\)](#)

For full NMC guidance on Duty of Candour please see link below:

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/the-professional-duty-of-candour>