

National Guideline Alliance (NGA)

Complaints Policy and Procedures 2018/19

Background

The National Guideline Alliance (NGA) is part of the Development Directorate at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). The RCOG is commissioned by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to develop evidence-based guidelines for health and social care in England and Wales on cancer, mental health, social care and women's health, children's health and social care topics. The RCOG delivers this commission via the NGA.

The NGA works in collaboration with a large stakeholder and customer group. The NGA strives to provide a professional and timely service in all our interactions with stakeholders and are committed to adhering to our policies and procedures.

However, we recognise that on occasion, our service may fall short of expectations. If you believe this has happened to you, you can use this complaints policy, which describes how to make a complaint and how it will be handled.

Our policy

This policy aims to:

- To provide a fair and transparent complaints policy, which is clear and accessible for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints policy so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To ensure all NGA staff know what to do if a complaint is received
- To ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved in a satisfactory manner
- To use any complaints received as a learning experience to improve our work

Definition of a complaint and policy scope

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about an aspect of the NGAs work.

The scope of this policy relates to:

- The conduct of a member of NGA staff
- The conduct of a committee member working on an NGA managed Guideline Committee
- The NGAs delivery of one of its policies or procedures

Out of scope are:

- Any aspect of the recruitment process to a Guideline Committee, including the outcome, which should instead be directed to NICE

- The output of the NGAs work in developing a guideline, for example but not limited to, a recommendation, which should instead be directed to NICE

How to make a complaint

To make a complaint, please email NGAcomplaints@rcog.org.uk ensuring you include the following information:

- Full details of the nature of your complaint, including where relevant, names, dates or the NGA policy or process you feel has not be adhered to
- Any available evidence to substantiate your complaint either within your email or as an attachment.
- Up to date contact details of your name, address and day time telephone contact number

By making your complaint in timely manner, the better the NGA can investigate it and identify, where necessary, a suitable remedy.

Therefore, complaints must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the incident complained of. Please note that any complaint submitted after this deadline will not be reviewed unless there are highly extenuating circumstances.

How your complaint will be managed

Stage 1

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days of its receipt.

Stage 2

Within five working days of receipt of your complaint we will confirm whether your complaint falls within the scope of this policy and the appropriate next steps.

Stage 3

A senior member of NGA staff will investigate your complaint and gather the facts relevant to the complaint, ensuring that the information gathered is accurate and complete. Their response will contain reasons for either upholding or rejecting your complaint. Where the NGA has upheld your complaint and proposes a remedy, a senior manager will contact you regarding this remedy. In addition, if the complaint is upheld, the action taken and the lessons learned or to be learned will be logged for future purposes.

Appeals

If you are unhappy regarding the decision or outcome of your complaint, you can request a review within 10 calendar days of receiving the NGA's response to your complaint. You will need to provide sufficient new evidence to substantiate your appeal. The NGA cannot review a decision that you disagree with, when there is no new evidence to consider.

Stage 1

We will acknowledge your request for a review within two working days of its receipt.

Stage 2

Within five working days we will confirm whether sufficient further evidence has been provided in order for this to be considered as part of a review of the complaint.

Stage 3

A different NGA senior manager who has not been involved in any aspect of your complaint will consider your request for a review and respond to you with reasons for either upholding or rejecting your review. Where the NGA has upheld your complaint and proposes a remedy, you will be contacted regarding this.

Confidentiality

Your complaint and all accompanying documentation, will be kept confidential as far as is possible in facilitating a fair and thorough investigation. Whilst your privacy and confidentiality will be respected, this needs to be balanced with:

- The need for an open and fair investigation
- Appropriate remedial action to be taken
- The outcome of the investigation to be reported appropriately
- Action to be taken to improve our processes and quality of service

Data retention

All materials relating to your complaint will be kept on active file for 12 months from the date of receipt of your first email to NGAcomplaints@rcog.org.uk and will then be destroyed.

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