



A Patient's Guide: Making Comments and Complaints



Introduction

The Fertility Partnership is committed to delivering safe, high quality, cost-effective fertility treatment. We will do our best to ensure the time you spend in our clinics 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, which can be relayed to us as described below.

Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we encourage our patients to provide feedback so that we can take your views and priorities into account. For this, we use our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire.

All patients are encouraged to complete a Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire. The feedback received from the surveys remains anonymous, and is regularly reviewed and shared throughout the clinics.

We will respond to any concerns considerately, quickly and as effectively as possible. All comments and complaints are taken seriously, regardless of their nature: medical, nursing, or patient services.

Other Ways of Raising an Issue or Concern

We hope you find your treatment at our clinics to be comfortable and that you have no concerns about the care you receive. If you do encounter any problems, however small, we ask that you please highlight any concerns as soon as they arise, rather than waiting, so that we may resolve these in a timely fashion. You can provide feedback:

During your visit to the Clinic

- Each department has a Manager please ask to speak to them directly as they are always happy to help, or ask to see the senior person on duty, or the Complaints Officer.



On your discharge from the Clinic

- As previously mentioned, you have the opportunity to complete our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire. Each questionnaire is reviewed and action is taken as required by the clinic.

After your discharge from Clinic

- Please write to the Clinic's General Manager. Address details can be found on Clinic's or The Fertility Partnership website.

The complaints process

Our complaints policy ensures your concerns are investigated and that you are given a full and prompt reply. This guide outlines our patient complaints procedure and gives you advice about how to get a satisfactory response to your concerns.

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

What are the first steps?

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

Under the Managing Complaints and Concerns 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.

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

1. Stage 1 - Local Resolution

At this level, the Clinic's senior management team or General Manager will handle your complaint.

2. Stage 2- Internal Appeal

Your complaint will be escalated to the Group Head of Quality.

3. Stage 3 - Independent External Adjudication

At this level, you can ask the relevant external regulatory body to look into your concerns if you are not satisfied with how we have handled the matter:

- The Human Fertility and Embryology Authority, by post:
Complaints Inspector
Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
10 Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2BU.
or email: enquiriesteam@hfea.gov.uk

Please note that The HFEA can only consider a complaint that indicates a potential breach of the Act, license conditions or Directions.

- The Care Quality Commission (England), by post:
CQC
Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA
or email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk
- The Healthcare Inspectorate (Scotland):
Tracy Birch, Programme Manager Independent Healthcare
Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle
Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB
or email: tracy.birch@nhs.net
- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Northern Ireland), by post:
Complaints Officer
Corporate Management Directorate
Department of Health., Annexe 3, Castle Buildings, Stormont
Estate, BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
or email: complaints@health-ni.gov.uk.

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 to whom you spoke. The department manager will attempt to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the complaint will be further investigated.

You will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 2 working days of receipt and then a full response within 20 working days from the clinic's General Manager or Complaint Officer.

How do I make a written complaint?

It is helpful to put all formal complaints in writing, addressed to the Clinic's General Manager or Complaints Officer. Please provide as much information as possible along with contact details, such as your name, telephone number and postal address. We will handle any personal data you provide in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016.

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 results you want from your complaint.

The clinic's General Manager or Complaints Officer will acknowledge your complaint letter within two working days, unless a full reply can be sent within five working days of receiving it. All documentation received by The Fertility Partnership corporate office will be forwarded to the clinic's person handling the complaint.

The clinic is responsible for investigating the complaint and will write to you with the outcome within 20 working days.

If a full response cannot be given at this point, you will receive a letter explaining the reason for the delay.

In any event, you will receive a holding letter every 20 working days until the matter is resolved.

When investigating the complaint, the General Manager/Complaints Officer may offer to call you to talk about your concerns or offer to meet you. After the meeting, if no further action is proposed, the clinic 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 clinic level. If you are not happy with our response, please inform the clinic's General Manager/Complaint Officer and explain why.

If you are dissatisfied with the clinic's response, you can ask for an internal appeal as stage 2.

What does an internal appeal involve?

The internal appeal stage is the responsibility of the Group Head of Quality. The clinic will provide their contact details as required.

If you are dissatisfied with the clinic's response, you will need to write to the Group Head of Quality within 6 months of the date of the final written response from the clinic. This response process will be the same as previously described.

What happens if I am still unhappy?

If you are dissatisfied with the internal appeal and the decision of the Group Head of Quality, you have the right to refer the matter to the relevant regulatory body. You must write to them within 6 months of the final decision of The Fertility Partnership's (TFP) internal review.

Questions?

If you have any questions about The Fertility Partnership's Managing Complaints and Concerns Policy, please contact the General Manager/Complaints Officer at the relevant Clinic. Address details can be found on the TFP website www.thefertilitypartnership.com.