

NHS SHARED BUSINESS SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

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1 Introduction

NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) aims to exceed the expectations of its clients and other stakeholders with the quality of the services that it delivers. It values the feedback that they provide, including complaints about its services, regarding them as a form of feedback about its performance.

2 Purpose of & justification for the policy

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to define how NHS SBS regards complaints about NHS SBS's services. The Complaints Management Process specifies how they are managed.

NHS SBS regards a complaint a specific statement of concerns or informed intent that its author wishes it to be treated as such.

The aim of NHS SBS's Complaints Policy is to provide:

- A rapid, open and conciliatory response to a complaint that meets the needs of the complainant whilst being fair to NHS SBS
- Assurance that a complaint will not prejudice the service that NHS SBS provides, on behalf of its clients.

The objectives of NHS SBS's Complaints Policy are:

- To give complaints and their management a high priority within NHS SBS
- To use complaints as a source of information for NHS SBS managers to guide the improvement of services
- To ensure the NHS SBS complaints process is managed effectively and efficiently

NHS SBS aims to fulfil the aims and objectives of this Complaints Policy by:

- operating a Complaints Management Process that deals with complaints in a timely and appropriate manner
- acting to address complaints at source and as they arise:
 - responding to complaints with appropriate actions
 - being pro-active in addressing problems as and when they arise, thus reducing the need for clients or service users to complain in order to obtain a resolution
 - empowering all employees – and especially front-line, customer-facing employees - to receive and resolve minor comments, issues and problems immediately and informally
- explaining to clients and service users how they should complain and the service that they should expect in response:

- Acknowledgement of receipt of a complaint – within two working days of receipt by the Line of Business
- Response to the complaint – within 30-working days of acknowledgement.
- If the complaint is complex a longer period can be negotiated with the individual at a local level.
- monitoring its performance in achieving these Service Levels in its management of complaints
- routinely reviewing its performance in terms of complaints about its services and its management of those complaints

3 Scope

This Policy is in line with the Department of Health's Complaints Policy, its underlying process (<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/contact-dh/dh-complaints>) and associated legislation but it does not duplicate or overlap with its coverage or the issues that they cover, but interprets them in the context of NHS SBS's business and ongoing developments in the organisation of the NHS.

3.1 Exclusions

This Policy does not cover the management of complaints about NHS SBS from NHS SBS employees; this is covered by internal policies and procedures.

This Policy does not cover the management of complaints about health services from users of NHS services delivered by contractual clients or their suppliers, outside of the scope of the services which NHS SBS provides.

4 Definitions

4.1 Definition of a Complaint

As part of its close working with the NHS, NHS SBS has adopted the definition of a complaint proposed by the NHS Executive, namely that a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction with the services provided by the organisation or individual, whether verbal or written, that requires a response.'

NHS SBS also recognises a complaint as a problem that is brought to the attention of NHS SBS, by a client or supplier, where there is an expectation to address a situation. The expectation is that this action is over and above simply supplying the original service that was the cause of the complaint.

4.2 Complainants

This Policy recognises the following types of stakeholder complainant:

- NHS SBS's contractual clients
- Users of NHS SBS's services (including suppliers to NHS organisations)
- NHS SBS third party named suppliers

Different service lines have different users, as Table 1 below shows:

SERVICE LINE	USERS (APART FROM CONTRACTUAL CLIENTS)
Finance & Accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS supplier organisations such as Performer Practices • Commercial and other suppliers • Debtors
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Suppliers
Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees from NHS organisations
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating all of the above areas

Table 1: Users of each Service Line, apart from Contractual Clients

4.3 Context of Contact

This Policy recognises that a client or user should first make contact with NHS SBS with an enquiry or an issue.

A client or user commonly issues a complaint if NHS SBS has not resolved an issue or responded to an enquiry to the client's or user's satisfaction. As it becomes a complaint, the complainant might escalate an issue within the complainant organisation.

5 Responsibilities

The Marketing and Communications Director is accountable to the NHS SBS Executive Board for the publication and distribution of this Policy.

5.1 Monitoring Implementation and Effectiveness of this Policy:

The NHS SBS Executive Committee monitors the implementation and effectiveness of this Policy.

5.2 Monitoring Performance of the organisation:

The Line of Business Complaints lead submits a quarterly update via a central reporting tool to the Quality Assurance Board for debate and discussion.

The Head of Information Governance and Director of Marketing and Communications submit a quarterly written report to the Executive Team supported through the quarterly Governance update.

Directors of each NHS SBS line of business (Finance & Accounting, Procurement, Employment Services and Corporate) have responsibility for implementing this policy in their area.

5.3 Managing Performance in each Line of Business

Each Line of Business Complaints lead is responsible for:

- Following the process for handling complaints as outlined in the NHS SBS complaints policy and the local standard operating procedures
- Providing a quarterly update to the Information Governance Team based on a key template detailing volumes and other agreed KPIs.
- Offering further information to the Line of Business Director, QAB and others as appropriate

Representing the Line of Business in a formal complaints meeting hosted by the Marketing and Communications Director.

6 Policy

6.1 Receiving a complaint and passing on a compliment.

A formal complaint should be received in writing, preferably via our corporate website form which is available on: [NHS SBS Corporate - Have Your Say](#), or via hard copy to:

Complaints, NHS Shared Business Services, Phoenix House, Topcliffe lane, Tingley, Wakefield WF3 1WE

6.2 Information required

The complainant should provide as much information as possible to enable a full investigation of the complaint and this should include the following:

- complainants name, email and postal addresses and contact telephone number;
- a clear description of the complaint;
- copies of any previous related correspondence;
- any reference numbers or other useful information.

6.3 Management of the Complaint Locally

The complaint will be managed in the timeframes set out in the corporate complaints policy and the approach in the local Standard Operating Procedures. It will be scored and rated with an outcome assigned with the appropriate action taken, e.g. local investigation or a root cause analysis.

6.4 Timescales for acknowledging and resolving a complaint

- Acknowledge the complaint within two working days of receipt
- An initial update will be sent within five working days
- Following investigation, we will provide a full written response within 30-working days from date of acknowledgement, where possible detailing the final outcome of the complaint
- If we are unable to provide a full response within this timeline, we will let the complainant know and provide a realistic estimate of when we can provide a full reply
- We will keep a record of the complaint on an internal log so we can monitor our progress

6.5 Investigating a complaint

The complaint will be scored on the NHS SBS Scoring Matrix to determine the severity of the complaint, and whether it needs an internal investigation or full root cause analysis. We will thoroughly review all of the related material, including relevant correspondence between NHS SBS, the complainant and any relevant organisations, as well as a full review of any relevant records held within NHS SBS. Where appropriate this may also involve liaising with NHS SBS operational teams and external contacts. At the end of the investigation, we will send a full written response will be made detailing the final outcome.

6.6 Unresolved complaints

If you are not satisfied with the final outcome of the complaint, we will escalate the matter to the Director of Finance and / or Director of Marketing and Communications for further review and action.

In the unlikely event of an unsatisfactory resolution to your complaint, we will continue to work with you and other relevant external parties in accordance with our contractual obligations.

7 Implementation and Monitoring

7.4 Implementation

The Complaints Management Process implements this Complaints Management Policy by defining the process that the organisation follows in order to manage complaints.

The Complaints Management Process is common across all areas of the NHS SBS organisation, but the population of some of the tasks in it is specific to individual service lines.

The Complaints Management Process in turn refers to Complaints Management Procedures for performing tasks in the Complaints Management Process.

7.5 Process for monitoring implementation & effectiveness

For this policy, the following monitoring processes are in place.

Standard	Monitoring process
Complaint acknowledgement within two working days of receipt	Internal log / Corporate Complaint Template
Initial update on process sent within five working days	Internal log / Corporate Complaint Template
full written response within 30 working days from date of acknowledgement, detailing the final outcome of the complaint	Internal log / Corporate Complaint Template
Quarterly Complaint Reporting and Monitoring	Corporate Complaint Template / Executive Board Update

8 Dissemination & Access to the Policy

8.4 Dissemination of and access to the policy

Within NHS SBS, Managers make their employees aware of the Policy and its implications for their work areas through internal communications and team briefings.

The Director of Marketing and Communication issues this Policy via nominated leads within each Service Line.

These nominated persons ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and able to access it. They also act as the lead contact officers within their respective Service Line.

The Information Governance team ensures that the current version of the Policy is stored centrally alongside other company policies for ease of access by employees in all locations.

NHS SBS Client Managers, Account Managers and Commercial Advisors ensure that clients and suppliers are aware of the public interpretation of the “Complaints Policy” and of the process for making complaints.

8.5 Review Updating & Archiving

The Information Governance, Risk and Assurance Officer maintains an archive of all policy documents.

The Director of Marketing and Communications ensures that this Policy is reviewed annually unless there are any legislative changes, in which case the NHS SBS Executive Committee will review the Policy in light of legislative changes as soon as.

9 Compliments

Compliments will also be passed on to our teams and individuals in a timely manner. Where learning can be gained from feedback this will be taken into consideration in future processes and planning.

10 References

This policy has been written in conjunction with the following:

- Internal HR policies for complaints about NHS SBS made by our employees
- NHS SBS HR Policies and Procedures
- NHS SBS Incident Management Policy
- NHS SBS SIRI Management Policy
- NHS SBS Complaints Management Process
- NHS SBS Complaints Management Procedures
- The NHS Complaints Regulations 2004