



Complaint Resolution Procedure

Information for Service Users

If you are unhappy with the facilities or services you have received from the Scottish Vein Centre or from the doctor looking after you, we would like to know about it as soon as possible so we can investigate your concerns and explain, apologise and take positive action where necessary.

In most circumstances, if you tell us about your concern quickly, we can resolve matters straightaway. To let us know about something with which you are unhappy please speak with Deirdre McBride, Practice Manager in the first instance. (Tel: 07366591367)

If you are not fully satisfied you can put your concerns in writing and use our formal Complaint Resolution Procedure which meets with the requirements set out by the Independent Doctors Federation (IDF) for its members and also the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS).

Exceptionally, if you would prefer not to let us know directly, you have the right to make a complaint to the regulatory authority in Scotland. You can contact Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Details of this alternative complaints pathway are included later.

The Complaint Resolution Procedure has three stages and reflects the principles of the ISCAS Code of Practice:

Stage 1 Local resolution within the individual practice

Stage 2 IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure to review the complaint

Stage 3 Independent Adjudication from ISCAS

Stage 1

To start the formal Complaint Resolution Procedure you should write or e-mail to:

Dr Rajesh Bhat
Medical Director
Scottish Vein Centre
19 Hawthornbank Lane
Edinburgh
EH4 3BH
info@scottishveincentre.co.uk

You should state what has caused you to have concerns and make your points clear. Please document when the relevant events took place and what results you expect from your complaint.

Complaints should normally be made as soon as possible at Stage 1, and **within 6 months** of the date of the event complained about, or within 6 months of the matter coming to the attention of the complainant. The time limit may be extended by the Scottish Vein Centre where the complainant has good reason for not making a complaint in the time limit (for example, where a complainant has been grieving), and there is a realistic opportunity of conducting a fair and effective investigation into the issues raised.

The named person at the practice will send you an acknowledgement of your letter **within three working days** of receipt of the complaint. You will be offered a meeting to discuss your complaint and to agree the heads of the complaint.

The investigation of your complaint will involve reviewing records of meeting(s) with you and reviewing all the correspondence and clinical records as well as statements provided by clinicians and others involved. Reasonable assistance will be provided for complainants where required e.g. for those with a disability or those whose first language is not English.

A full response to your complaint will be made **within 20 days of receipt** of the complaint. If the investigation is still in **progress after 20 days** a letter will be sent to you explaining the delay and a full response made **within five days** of reaching a conclusion. In any event a holding letter will be sent **every 20 days** where an investigation is continuing.

If you remain dissatisfied following the final Stage 1 response, then you can request a review of your complaint, known as Stage 2 by writing to:

Complaint Manager
The Independent Doctors Federation
Lettsom House
11 Chandos Street
Marylebone
London
W1G 9EB

Escalation to Stage 2 must be made in writing within **six months** of the final Stage 1 response.

Stage 2

The IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure will consider your complaint. The IDF Complaint Manager will send you an acknowledgement of your letter within **three working days** of receipt of your complaint and will request a summary of the matters that remain outstanding that you wish to be investigated. You will be invited to attend a meeting at the start of Stage 2 in order to clarify the matters that remain outstanding and obtain a greater understanding of what you hope to achieve by escalating the complaint.

The IDF Complaint Manager will not have been involved in the matters that led to the complaint or the handling of the complaint at Stage 1. You will be asked to consent to release of records from the doctor. The IDF Complaint Manager will undertake a review of the documentation, any correspondence and the handling of and response to the complaint at Stage 1. If the review is still in progress **after 20 days** a letter will be sent to you explaining the delay and a full response made **within five days** of reaching a conclusion.

In any event a holding letter will be sent **every 20 days** where a review is continuing. The IDF Complaint Manager will write to you when the review is completed to either confirm the outcome at Stage 1 or to offer an alternative resolution

At this time the IDF will advise you of your right to take the matter further to Stage 3 independent external adjudication by the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISACS).

Throughout the process all information, documents and records relevant to your complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information will be divulged to any parties who are not involved in the IDF Complaint Resolution Procedure, unless required to do so by law.

Stage 3

This stage is only available to you if you remain dissatisfied once Stage 1 and Stage 2 are exhausted and aims to bring about a final resolution of the complaint to both parties.

In such a situation you should request the adjudication by writing to the Secretariat:

Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS)
CEDR (Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution), 3rd Floor
100 St. Paul's Churchyard
London
EC4M 8BU
Tel: 020 7536 6091
Email: info@iscas.org.uk

This written request for adjudication must be made **within six months** of the final determination by the IDF at Stage 2. You should provide reasons to explain the dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage 2. ISCAS will acknowledge receipt of the request **within three working days**.

ISCAS will seek confirmation from the IDF that Stage 2 has been completed. ISCAS will notify the IDF of a request for Stage 3 independent external adjudication. The IDF will respond to requests from ISCAS **within ten working days** and confirm whether Stages 1 and 2 have been completed. ISCAS will then be your main contact once adjudication is started. You will be asked to consent to the release of records from the doctor and the IDF relevant to the complaint. ISCAS will issue the decision **within 20 working days** or provide a progress **update every 20 working days** if the decision is delayed. A report will be made to you, the doctor concerned and the IDF.

Complaining directly to Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)

Where possible HIS will always encourage you to resolve the issues that concern you with the healthcare provider. If you feel you are unable to do this or would rather come to HIS first, they will assess the complaint and investigate if it meets the complaints investigation criteria.

Further information on how to complain directly to HIS is available on their website :

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org and search “How we deal with complaints about healthcare (IHC) services”

To make a complaint write or e-mail to :

Programme Manager
Independent Healthcare Services Team
Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB
Email: his.ihcregulation@nhs.scot
Tel : 01316234342

HIS can investigate complaints that relate to:

- the quality of care and/or treatment experienced
- care environment or equipment issues
- poor treatment by a member of staff
- operational and procedural issues
- service/provider’s failure to follow the appropriate process, and
- lack of information provision by the service/provider.

Key principles : The Complaints Procedure - A Quick Guide

STEP 1: Receiving and assessing the complaint

Complaints can be made by phone, in person or in writing. An acknowledgement will be sent **within 1 working day**. An assessment will be carried out **within 5 working days**.

STEP 2: Planning for the investigation

Inspectors will plan how the investigation will be carried out and contact the complainant to agree the complaint areas to be investigated.

STEP 3: The investigation

Eligible complaints will be investigated and a written response provided **within 20 working days** of receipt of complaint, unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time, which the complainant will be notified of.

STEP 4: Decision making and reporting

We will send a complaint investigation outcome report to the complainant and the provider. We will publish a summary of all upheld complaint investigations on our website.

STEP 5: Follow-up (if upheld)

Provider's action plans will be followed up **16 weeks after** the date of the complaint investigation outcome report, unless action is required immediately. outcome report.

STEP 6: Appeals and grievances

If a complainant or provider believes we have made a mistake in our investigation findings,

- they can ask us to carry out a post-investigation review **within 10 working days** of the
- complaint investigation outcome report.

Redress Scheme

The Scottish Vein Centre has now registered with a new redress scheme that is of benefit both to the complainant and the provider. This has been endorsed by the regulator, Healthcare Improvement Scotland

The Cosmetic Redress Scheme is a new, straightforward and easy to use redress (ombudsman) scheme.

The main purposes of the Cosmetic Redress Scheme are to allow practitioners to comply with their legal requirement under the ADR Regulations 2015 to signpost service users to a government authorised consumer redress scheme and to settle or resolve complaints made by service users against our Members.

Our Members and consumers will both benefit from our simple three stage process to resolve the complaint:

1. The Member will first be given an opportunity to resolve the complaint directly
2. The Cosmetic Redress Scheme offers a mediation service
3. The Cosmetic Redress Scheme Ombudsman will make a decision on the complaint

Information of the Cosmetic Redress Scheme ; www.cosmeticredress.co.uk

Additional information for service users about ISCAS can be found at: <https://iscas.cedr.com/>

Additional information for service users about the IDF can be found at: IDF – www.idf.uk.net

Unacceptable behaviour by complainants

At each stage of the complaints procedure, it might be deemed that a service user's behaviour is unacceptable. We have a policy in place to handle unacceptable behaviour of complainants.

A copy of the Scottish Vein Centre Complaints Policy complete document including how we deal with unacceptable behaviour is available on request.

