



Complaints & Compliments Policy

If you have a compliment or a complaint about our service, we want to hear about it.

We aim to provide the best service we can but may sometimes fall short of the mark – if this is the case, please speak to us. We see honest feedback as a way to help us improve our standards and you will not be treated any differently because you have complained about our service. We will simply do our best to put right anything that has gone wrong.

At the same time, we would very much like to hear from you if you have something good to say about the LMC's service. Hearing about how we have helped you or your organisation can help us to understand which of our services really makes a difference to our constituents.

You can make a complaint in person, in writing, by email or by phone using the contact details below. You can also send us a compliment via any of these routes.

Humberside Group of Local Medical Committees Ltd
Albion House
Albion Lane
Willerby
Hull
HU10 6TS

Tel: 01482 655111

Email: humberside.lmcgroup@nhs.net

If your complaint is regarding a member of the LMC staff team, it should be directed in the first instance to the Chief Executive.

If your complaint relates to the Chief Executive, it should be directed to the Chairperson of the LMC in your area. You can obtain their contact information from the office on request.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt and you will receive a full response within 25 working days. Some complaints are more complicated and take longer to investigate. If a full reply cannot be provided within this timescale, we will keep you updated of progress, the reason for the delay and inform you of a revised date by which you can expect our full response.

1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to encourage a culture in which feedback is actively invited and facilitates service improvements.

Complaints can be made by constituents or any person from an organisation that has dealings with the LMC.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff employed by the LMC, LMC Committee Members and LMC Board Members.

3. Updating & Review

Implementation date:	April 2015
Review cycle:	Every 2 years
Last Reviewed:	May 2022
Next Review date:	April 2024

4. Definition of a Complaint

The LMC considers a complaint to be “a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable”.

Based on this definition, a complaint will be recorded when we receive an expression of dissatisfaction with some element of our service or the way in which we have dealt with an issue.

5. Responsibility

Staff

All members of staff employed by the LMC are responsible for recording complaints and for progressing all complaints in line with the timescales and processes set out in the procedures.

The Senior Management Team

Will be responsible for ensuring that trends are monitored, action is taken in line with this policy and procedure and that an annual report is prepared for the Board.

The LMC Chairs

Will be responsible for dealing with complaints in line with this policy and procedure as appropriate.

The Chair of the Board of Management

Will be responsible for ensuring that appeals are dealt with promptly and in line with this policy and procedure.

6. Recording

All concerns and complaints will be recorded so that they can be used to inform service improvements. This is regardless of whether they are minor issues dealt with on the spot or more serious complaints requiring investigation and a formal response.

7. Reporting

The LMC will embed the process of reviewing the complaints log periodically to see if trends and themes have emerged over time that indicate a recurring or persistent problem that should be addressed.

A report will be prepared for each Board Meeting detailing:

- the number of complaints received
- the number of complaints that were upheld
- A summary of the reasons for the complaints
- A narrative about significant issues relating to the LMC's experience of complaints

Compliments and complaints will be considered as part of the Appraisal process of the staff involved in them.

8. Method of Complaint

The LMC will accept complaints made in person, in writing, by email, by phone or through any other digital means including social media. All expressions of dissatisfaction will be treated seriously and be dealt with in line with this policy.

9. Underlying Principles

All complaints will be taken seriously.

Complainants will be treated with respect and will be kept informed.

We will investigate fully and act on what we find.

We will be open to doing things differently in future.

10. Related Policies

The policy will work in conjunction with staff contracts and the LMC's key policies and procedures including:

Staff Code of Conduct and Model of Professional Behaviour

Disciplinary Rules

Disciplinary Procedure

Grievance Procedure

Capability Procedure

Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

All staff and Committee Members involved in dealing with a complaint will follow the procedure set out below.

1. Record the Complaint

- 1.1 All complaints will be typed into the complaints log.
- 1.2 The log will be updated as the different stages of this procedure are followed.

2. Pass the Complaint to the Most Appropriate Person for Response

- 2.1 A complaint may be addressed to a specific individual or to the organisation in general. The person making the complaint will not always be aware of the most appropriate person to assist them in resolving their problem.
- 2.2 Each complaint will be considered and a decision made on who is the most appropriate person to respond. This will ensure that a prompt and relevant response can be made and that the complainant does not feel that they are being passed from pillar to post.
- 2.3 The following principles will be used when deciding who should deal with a complaint:
 - If the complaint is addressed to an individual and it is within their remit to give a full response, then they will deal with the complaint.
 - If the complaint is about a member of staff, it will be passed to their line manager for response.
 - If the complaint is about a member of the Senior Management Team, it will be passed to the Chief Executive of the LMC.
 - If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, it will be passed to the Chairperson of the LMC.
 - If the complaint is about an LMC member, it will be passed to the Chairperson of the LMC for the relevant constituency.
 - If the complaint is about a Chairperson of the LMC, it will be passed to the Vice Chairperson.
- 2.4 Once the complaint has been passed to the appropriate person, they will be responsible for:
 - Following the complaints procedure through to its satisfactory completion
 - Ensuring that the complaints log is duly updated to record actions and conclusion.

3. Acknowledge the Complaint

- 3.1 All complaints, whether made verbally, in writing or electronically, must be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt.
- 3.2 The acknowledgement must include:
 - The name and contact details of the person who will be dealing with the complaint
 - Suggested next steps (This will normally include the offer of a discussion, either by phone or in person, to discuss the issues raised.)

- The timescales for investigating and concluding the complaint. (In accordance with this policy, this will normally be 25 working days from receipt of the initial complaint. If the complaint is complex or in need of substantial investigation, it may be necessary to highlight this at this stage and propose a more appropriate timescale to allow for this.)

4. Initial Discussion

- 4.1 An initial discussion with the complainant should take place (either by phone or in person) as soon as possible. Very often, a conversation will be all that is needed to get to the bottom of the problem and identify a resolution.
- 4.2 If a solution cannot be immediately identified, the conversation should be used to agree the next steps.
- 4.3 The next steps must be confirmed in writing.

5. Investigating the Complaint

- 5.1 The complaint must be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner and the complainant should be kept informed of progress and particularly of any changes to the expected timescales for dealing with the issue.
- 5.2 The person investigating the complaint should seek assistance or advice from colleagues where necessary.
- 5.3 In some cases, it may become clear from the investigations that it is necessary to escalate the complaint to a more senior member of staff, to the Chair of one of the LMCs or to the Chair of the Board. Complaints about members of staff must always be referred to the correct level, particularly if it becomes apparent through the investigation that there may be disciplinary issues to be considered.

6. Concluding the Complaint

- 6.1 On concluding investigations, the person dealing with the complaint will write to the complainant. This communication will include:
 - Details of how the complaint has been investigated
 - A summary of the evidence considered
 - Any conclusions reached
 - What action the LMC will be taking as a result of its findings

7. Appeals

- 7.1 If a complainant expresses dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint, there will be a right of appeal.
- 7.2 All appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Management.
- 7.3 The Chair may consider the appeal themselves or may choose to:
 - Appoint another member of the Board to investigate and consider the appeal
 - Establish a sub-committee of the Board to investigate and consider the appeal

- 7.4 Steps 3 to 5 outlined in the procedure above will be followed again as the structure for the appeals process i.e. acknowledging the appeal, initial discussion and investigating the complaint.
- 7.5 The complainant will be kept informed of progress and timescales.
- 7.6 Following investigation, a report will be presented to the Board for consideration which summarises the findings and sets out a recommendation for either rejecting or upholding the appeal. It will also set out any proposed actions.
- 7.7 The Board will make the final decision on whether to reject or uphold the appeal.
- 7.8 The complainant will be informed by the Board as in 6.1 above.
- 7.9 There will be no further right of appeal.