

RCM PROCEDURE FOR FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS FROM MEMBERS



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What you think about us matters

We are committed to providing high-quality services to our members and to protecting, influencing and supporting the midwifery profession and maternity support workers. However, we recognise that occasionally things do not go as planned, or that you may feel so disappointed with an issue that you want to take the matter further. We are constantly trying to improve and are eager to learn from your experiences.

We have a feedback and complaints procedure which we hope will make it easy for you to let us know what you think and to make sure we are open and transparent when you are not happy with the services we provide.

Principles

This procedure is governed by the following principles.

- If you want to make a complaint you should know how to do so and have ready access to the process.
- We will acknowledge and respond to your complaint quickly, politely and efficiently, and keep you updated throughout the process.
- We will investigate complaints thoroughly and take appropriate action if we find they are justified.
- We are open to constructive criticism and aim to learn from complaints.
- We make sure that staff and elected officers are able to handle complaints professionally.
- Our responses to complaints will be open about our findings and the reasons for our decisions.

How to complain or give us feedback

This procedure allows you to give us feedback or complain about the services we provide or the behaviour, actions or failures of our staff or elected representatives.

You can choose whether to make an informal or formal complaint, based on how strongly you feel about the issue you are unhappy with. As a general guide:

- you should make an informal complaint or give us feedback if we have left you dissatisfied with any part of our products or services or any decision that we have made (for example, you might be unhappy with our approach to a particular issue or feel that one of our products and services is not good enough); and
- you should make a formal complaint if you believe you have been unreasonably disadvantaged by a failure in any service or facility that we provided as a member benefit or as a consequence of action we have taken (for example, you may feel that we have not provided you with a member benefit or that the quality of the service we have provided has been poor).

We hope that most issues can be dealt with quickly and locally with the person concerned, and we would encourage you to contact the member of staff or elected officer providing the service or facility you are unhappy with as soon as possible to provide feedback. You can contact our staff through RCM Connect on 0330 303 0444.

Stage 1 – informal complaint

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it should be possible to avoid a formal complaint by discussing the matter in full with the person involved as soon as possible. If appropriate, you can arrange a personal interview with that person to discuss and deal with matters.

Informal complaints will usually be dealt with by the member of staff, or the representative the complaint is made to. The person who receives your complaint may ask their line manager or, in the case of an elected representative, their regional or national officer for guidance before responding.

If the person who receives the complaint believes they are not the appropriate person to deal with it, they will pass it to their line manager or the relevant elected officer.

The person who deals with an informal complaint will make sure that a record of the complaint and the response or outcome is filed with the Complaints Co-ordinator.

If you feel the matter you have raised has not been dealt with properly or if you want to make a formal complaint, you can contact our Complaints Co-ordinator through RCM Connect and we will follow this formal complaints policy.

Stage 2 – formal complaint

This procedure is for handling formal complaints made by our members. A formal complaint is normally a complaint which:

- (a) is made in writing (including by email); and
 - (b) is made by, or on behalf of, a person who is a member of the RCM but is not a member of our staff. In exceptional circumstances, and if our CEO agrees, we may respond to enquiries made by your friend, relative or other representative. Members of staff should use the appropriate employment policies and procedures.
1. Once they have received your formal complaint, our Complaints Co-ordinator will get in touch with you to acknowledge receiving it and to clarify any issues they are not clear on. They will also explain our procedure and keep you informed if there are any delays in investigating the matter or responding to you.
 2. An investigating officer will be appointed. This will usually be the manager of the service, facility or work area that you are complaining about. They will investigate the issues you have raised and provide a written response to you within 21 days. Their response will aim to deal with your complaint, offer an explanation and apology where appropriate and set out any actions we can take to learn from your complaint and improve on our services in the future.
 3. If your formal complaint names a member of our staff or a workplace representative (WPR) as being fully or partly responsible for the matter you are complaining about, the investigating officer will give that member of staff or WPR a copy of the complaint as soon as possible. The member of staff or WPR must provide the investigating officer with written comments on the complaint and their involvement in the matter.
 4. The investigating officer will take the necessary steps to investigate the complaint. If the investigating officer is satisfied that the complaint, or any aspect of it, is justified, they will decide on an appropriate course of action.

The aim is to establish whether or not:

 - (a) there has been a failure or failures of the sort alleged in the complaint; and
 - (b) you have been reasonably disadvantaged as a result of the alleged failure or failures.
 5. The investigating officer's reply should include the following.
 - (a) A statement of each aspect of the complaint they have investigated.
 - (b) In relation to each aspect, whether or not they uphold the complaint.
 - (c) (i) If the investigating officer upholds your complaint, the reply will include an apology for the failure and will state any other remedy which the investigating officer considers appropriate to settle the matter.
 - (ii) If the investigating officer does not uphold your complaint, the reply will explain why.

6. If you are not happy with the way we have reviewed and responded to your complaint, you can ask the Director of Services to Members to review the way we handled it. This will not normally be a re-investigation of your original complaint, but will assess whether our initial investigation was fair and thorough. If the review finds that the investigation was not carried out to the standards we expect, we may start a fresh investigation. The Director of Services to Members' decisions are final.
7. The RCM Board will receive a report every six months on the number and broad content of complaints we have received, including the outcomes and any action taken. Names will be removed from the complaints before they are included in the report.

Scope and exclusions

This procedure applies to all our members. However, we will not normally consider your complaint under this procedure if any or all of the following apply.

- (a) The complaint relates to an event that happened more than six months before the date of the complaint being made.
- (b) The complaint relates to matters which have already been investigated in a previous complaint or are currently under investigation, or if it would be more appropriate to investigate the matter under a different procedure.
- (c) The complaint is not serious or is made out of spite.
- (d) You are not a member of the RCM.
- (e) Someone else has made the complaint on your behalf. We will only consider complaints made by someone else on your behalf if that person is acting on your specific instructions.
- (f) You make the complaint anonymously, even if you are a member of the RCM.

We may decide not to deal with your complaint. If so, we will send you our reasons for this in writing.



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