



Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Midland Fertility Services (MFS) is dedicated to providing a high quality service and hopes that every patient will feel entirely satisfied with the quality of their care during treatment. As part of this commitment, MFS has a rigorous complaints procedure, which is available to any patient who may require it.

If a Patient Has a Grievance

If a patient would like to discuss their expectations or any aspect of their treatment at MFS, they should initially speak to the relevant member of staff so their complaint may be addressed, and possibly resolved, straight away. If they feel that this does not resolve the issues, they should put their complaint in writing, addressed to the complaints officer, Anna Kavanagh.

To ensure that MFS is made fully aware of the concerns, the information should be supplied in writing so the matter can be processed through the MFS complaints system. If a patient is unable to do this, a member of MFS staff is available to help.

MFS supplies an annual statistical analysis of all received complaints to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and the Healthcare Commission.

Objectives of the Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure is designed to give a patient an opportunity to fully outline their grievances and to address them with a representative of MFS. It is the responsibility of MFS to:

- ensure that all reasonable assistance is given to a patient in presenting the complaint
- ensure that the complaint is fully investigated
- produce a response detailing the results of any investigations
- produce an explanation of what happened
- produce, where appropriate, an apology

The Complaints Procedure

When a complaint is received, MFS should issue an acknowledgement letter within two working days. It is the responsibility of MFS to investigate the complaint and compile a report to send back to the patient within twenty days of the receipt of the complaint. Where this is not possible, the patient should receive a letter explaining the reason for the delay.

The complaint will be assigned to an incident administrator who, on behalf of the complaints officer, will investigate the complaint and consult with the appropriate line manager to identify any changes that may need to be made to MFS's working practices as a result of the complaint. These changes will be fed back to staff at the appropriate unit/departmental meeting. The response letter the patient receives will include a summary of the investigation findings and any changes to work practice.

MFS's insurers require notification of any complaint that involves concerns with clinical care, or which meets other criteria. If it is necessary to progress matters, the release of confidential information is permissible under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 s.33(6)(f), with the exception of information that enables the identification of a donor or information for the purpose of the determination of legal parentage (where further rules apply), other than in the case of a parental order. This means that MFS's insurers may be notified, even without the patient's express consent.

Conciliation

If the response fails to resolve the complaint to the patient's satisfaction they should be invited to proceed to conciliation. The aim of conciliation is to produce a clear and agreed statement of position by all parties concerned with the complaint together with proposed redress, if any, sought by the patient and offered by MFS. It is hoped that in the process of reaching this understanding a solution will be found which will satisfy both parties.

The patient should be invited to the unit to discuss the grievance with the complaints officer. The appointment should be made at a mutually convenient time and at the earliest possible opportunity. The patient may be accompanied by a 'friend' who may represent them.

Where it is felt appropriate, the chairman of the Board, Judith Baron, may be invited to run the conciliation meeting and to compile a report of the conciliation procedure and its outcome. A written summary of the position at the end of conciliation should be produced and agreed by both parties together with details of any action or redress that arises as a result.

Concluding the Complaints Procedure

The patient has twenty days to respond to MFS's report. If MFS does not hear from the patient within this time, then the clinic will assume that they are happy with the response and the complaint will be closed. Before this happens, the patient will be informed in writing of the decision to close the complaint and is notified of a two week period in which to re-start the process should they feel that their concerns have not been resolved.

A patient is free to withdraw from the complaints procedure at any time by informing the complaints officer, who will close the file and inform all interested parties.

Contacting the Healthcare Commission

Midland Fertility Services Ltd is registered with the Healthcare Commission, certificate number P030002061. Patients may contact the Healthcare Commission at:

The Healthcare Commission

Dominions House
Lime Kiln Close
Stoke Gifford
Bristol
BS34 8SR

T: 020 7448 8158 W: www.healthcarecommission.org.uk