

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS
RELATING TO THE NHS FIFE R&D DEPARTMENT**

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 AUTHOR: Julie Aitken
 R&D Trials Facilitator

APPROVED BY on behalf of NHS Fife: Dr Alex Baldacchino
 Research & Development Director

Signature



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Contact Person for this SOP(Fife): Julie Aitken (julieaitken2@nhs.net)

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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1.0	Julie Aitken R&D Trials Facilitator	18/06/2016	N/A – New Adapted from TASC SOP 52
2.0	Julie Aitken R&D Trials Facilitator	29/08/2018	Updated to reflect current practice which follows the NHS Scotland Public Facing Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

1. PURPOSE

This SOP describes the procedure used to provide an accessible, transparent and straight-forward method of resolving legitimate complaints concerning the NHS Fife R&D Department.

It is the responsibility of all staff using this SOP to ensure they are using the latest version of it. The latest version is available via the Research & Development (R&D) pages on the NHS Fife Intranet (www.nhsfife.org/research) or for guidance, contact the R&D Office (fife-uhb.randd@nhs.net).

2. APPLICABILITY

This SOP applies to NHS Fife R&D staff and all NHS Fife staff involved in research.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 NHS Fife follows the NHS Scotland Public Facing Model Complaints Handling Procedure which implements a standardised approach to handling complaints across the NHS and complies with Guidance from the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman and also meets all the requirements and principles of the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011. This SOP provides details of the process to be followed for complaints relating to the NHS Fife R&D Department.
- 3.2 The overriding preference is for all reasonable steps to be taken to promptly resolve the complaint as close as possible to the point of origin. Handled well, complaints allow a form of address when things go wrong and can also help to continuously improve NHS Fife R&D Department processes and services.
- 3.3 Treating complaints fairly is at the core of handling a complaint. The expectation is that the NHS Fife R&D Department will act reasonably and fairly in the event of a complaint and in line with NHS Fife policy relating to complaints.

This means:

- Having a consistent, documented approach to handling complaints
- Answering complaints in a fair and timely manner
- Being honest and clear
- Ensuring there are no barriers to making a complaint or submitting feedback to NHS Fife R&D Department
- Putting things right
- Learning from complaints received and taking corrective actions and improving procedures to prevent reoccurrences

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 Complainants must always be provided with contact details for the Assistant R&D Director (or delegate) in the event of a complaint.
- 4.2 If the complainant is a patient who requires independent support to complain they should be signposted to the Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) who can be contacted via the website: <https://www.cas.org.uk/pass> or by telephoning 0800 917 2127.
- 4.3 NHS Fife staff must contact the Assistant R&D Director (or delegate) as soon as they become aware of any potential complaint relating to the R&D Department.
- 4.4 The Assistant R&D Director (or delegate) must record all communications using the Complaints Log template (Doc Ref 38-01) from the day the complaint was made until resolution and closure.

- 4.5 The Assistant R&D Director (or delegate) will send a response to the complainant, usually within 5 working days of receipt, describing the corrective actions taken, or to be taken, to resolve the issue and record the date of this response.
- 4.6 If the complaint requires a detailed investigation, the Assistant R&D Director must acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days of receipt and advise the complainant that there will be an investigation with anticipated response back within 20 working days.
- 4.7 The Assistant R&D Director must liaise with the necessary personnel or escalate as appropriate. If escalation is required, this should be recorded on the Complaint Log (Doc Ref 38-01) and the Complaints Summary Report (Doc Ref 38-02).
- 4.8 A full response to the complaint should be given in writing as soon as possible and within 20 working days. If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, the complainant must be advised and the revised time limits agreed and confirmed in writing.
- 4.9 Once the response is accepted by the complainant, the Assistant R&D Director (or delegate) must record the date of resolution and complaint closure on the Complaints Log and the Complaints Summary Report.
- 4.10 Paper copies of the completed Complaint Log, Complaints Summary Report and all related documents and correspondence must be filed in a locked filing cabinet in the Assistant R&D Director's Office with restricted access.
- 4.11 If after receiving the response the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision or the way in which the complaint was dealt with they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to review it (<https://www.spsso.org.uk/>).
- 4.12 Summary Reports and Logs should be reviewed periodically by the R&D Director for trend analysis with appropriate resultant action(s) taken. Reports should be provided for the R&D Operational Group and Research Governance Group.
- 4.13 If a written complaint is received from a patient it should be scanned and emailed to the Patient Relations Team within 24 hours of receipt advising that the Assistant R&D Director will deal with the complaint. The Patient Relations Team can be contacted on Tel: 01592 648153 Ext: 28153, by emailing: patientrelations.fife@nhs.net.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The NHS Scotland Public Facing Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Doc Ref 38-01 - NHS Fife R&D Complaints Log

Doc Ref 38-02 - NHS Fife R&D Complaints Summary Report

6. DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

R&D Research & Development
SOP Standard Operating Procedure
SPSO Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

7. REFERENCES

NHS Fife Complaint Handling procedure - NHS Scotland Public Facing Model Complaints Handling Procedure:

<https://www.nhsfife.org/nhs/index.cfm?fuseaction=nhs.newsdisplay&objectid=64090906-B0DF-B907-610A479E4BDB5625>)

Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/Patients-Rights>)