Complaints Handling Procedure

CREATE is committed to providing a consistently high-quality level of care and treatment. We understand, however, that sometimes things go wrong. If you are dissatisfied with your CREATE experience, please inform us and we will do our best to resolve it. All feedback from patients, carers and the public is welcomed and actively used to inform service improvement at every level.

This leaflet tells you about our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any **expression of dissatisfaction**, whether oral or written, from or on behalf of an eligible complainant about the provision of, or failure to provide, clinical services.

How do I complain?

Wherever possible we encourage you to speak with a member of staff at the time. It's easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the clinic concerned, where staff will always try to resolve any problems on the spot if it is possible to do so.

You can complain in person at the clinic where you have received care, treatment or advice, or where the incident that you want to complain about happened. You can also complain by phone (using the phone number for the clinic you have received care in) or in writing by email:

Email: complaints@createfertility.co.uk
complaints@abcivf.co.uk

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and address, and your email address if this is your preferred method of contact;
- the full name, address and date of birth of the person affected if you are complaining on behalf of somebody else;
- as much as you can about the complaint;
    - what has gone wrong;
    - when did this happen;
    - where did this happen; and
    - how you want us to resolve the matter.

Giving us this information will help us to clearly identify the problem and to determine what we need to do to resolve matters for you.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

You must make your complaint within 6 months of:
- the event you want to complain about;
- finding out that you have a reason to complain

What happens next?

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. Our complaints process has 2 stages:

Stage 1 – early, local resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. Where appropriate, this could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

Sometimes we will have to make some enquiries before we can respond to your complaint. We will aim to give you our decision at Stage 1 in 5 working days or less.

If we cannot resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to Stage two. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

Stage 2 – Investigation & Written Response

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 we will:
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for; and
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 25 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 25 working days, we will tell you, agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on our progress.

What about my ongoing treatment?

To ensure you receive the safest and highest-quality care, we will pause treatment while we investigate any formal complaint you raise. This short pause allows us to fully understand your concerns, resolve any issues, and make sure you feel confident and supported before continuing treatment. Our team will keep you informed throughout the process, and we will work with you to resume treatment as soon as the investigation is complete.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

NHS patients

If you are dissatisfied with the response provided, you have the right to refer your complaint to the PHSO. The remit of the PHSO is to assess complaint cases where local resolution has been unsuccessful and if they are satisfied that local resolution is completed they will review the complaint and decide whether or not they will undertake their own investigation. Following a PHSO investigation a report on the findings will be sent to CREATE. If the complaint is upheld recommendations will be made to CREATE.

Private patients

If you are dissatisfied with the response provided, you may be able to refer your complaint to the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) by email:
Email: **enquiriesteam@hfea.gov.uk**.

Please see the HFEA website for further information on complaints they are able to deal with.

Quick Guide

You can register your complaint at the time of the issue or subsequently by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

Stage 1 : Early Resolution at Clinic Level.

Clinic managers will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within 5 working days if possible.

If you are dissatisfied with this resolution, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

Stage 2: Investigation & Written Response

CREATE will review your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with a response you have received at Stage 1 or if your complaint is deemed to be complex or requiring detailed investigation.

We will aim to respond to your complaint within 25 working days.