

COMPLAINTS POLICY

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR, AND WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This document is intended to provide information to anyone who wants to complain about the work of the NI Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) and its staff. It also sets out the way in which NIMDTA will manage this complaint process.

This Complaints Policy does not cover

- complaints or **concerns about the NHS**, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure. Details about this can be found at www.nhs.uk
- complaints about **an issue that is already the subject of disciplinary proceedings**. In this situation, we will not launch a separate complaint investigation, but we will tell the complainant that the matter is already under investigation
- This document is organised into three sections, which address the **type** of complaints NIMDTA deals with, **aims and principles**, and **how we deal with complaints**.

WHAT TYPE OF COMPLAINTS DOES THIS POLICY COVER?

This policy applies to all verbal and written communication about the work of NIMDTA and its staff where there is a **clear indication that the person or organisation wishes to make a formal complaint**. On all occasions, we will try to resolve concerns in a customer orientated way. When it is not clear in a letter, email or telephone call that a person wants to make a complaint rather than express a concern or offer constructive comments, we will ask the person in writing how they want their communication to be treated.

It covers:

- Complaints about the way NIMDTA has acted, or failed to act in the exercise of its statutory duties.
- Complaints about the way any member of NIMDTA or its staff has acted in the exercise of his or her duties, for example:
 - the manner in which an individual has been treated by the Agency or its staff, such as unfair treatment or decision-making
 - the general or observed behaviour and competence of individuals employed by the Agency. The policy also covers recent former employees and those working on behalf of NIMDTA who are not technically NIMDTA employees (e.g. lecturers, education supervisors)
 - the way in which any complaint has been handled. This will be dealt with at the second review stage. See page 6
 - complaints from the public about the content (including accuracy and objectivity) of a published NIMDTA report
 - complaints about allocation of goods or services provided to the public (for example training opportunities, flexible training, overseas training, study leave)
 - complaints about the way NIMDTA handles its recruitment

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

- It is our aim to:
 - Deal with complaints efficiently and fairly
 - Keep complainants fully informed of our progress with their complaint
 - Achieve a resolution which is satisfactory to both the complainant and NIMDTA.

- NIMDTA is committed to the principle of **openness**. Where it is established that we have made a mistake, we will acknowledge this.

- Complaints can be a valuable source of information about the way an organisation is working. We will do our best to use the principles derived from complaints as a tool to **improve our practices**.

- All complaints will be treated as **confidential**, and handled in line with NIMDTA's information handling policies. This means that the complaint will be seen only by the people who are directly involved in processing, handling and responding to the complaint. This policy has taken into account the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

HOW NIMDTA DEALS WITH COMPLAINTS

Where possible, you should complain to NIMDTA in writing either by letter or by using the form provided, so that we have a formal written record of your complaint. Complaints can be sent by post, email or fax. If you are unable to write, other arrangements, for example receiving your complaint over the telephone, will be made to help equality of access to the complaints process. Your telephone complaint will be confirmed back to you, in writing to check that the information taken is accurate before the complaint can be investigated.

If you want to make a complaint during site visits or other occasions where NIMDTA staff members are working off site, this policy document will be made available to you.

Complaints can be made up to 6 months from the date of the discovery of the incident.

The correspondence and complaints coordinator will be your first point of contact and will deal with the complaint in the first instance. The relevant details will be provided to the most appropriate NIMDTA director / managers to investigate the complaint. This data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The correspondence and complaints coordinator will send a written acknowledgement to you within five working days of your complaint being received at NIMDTA.

The NIMDTA complaints process has two stages.

Stage 1:

- Complaints will be forwarded to the most appropriate NIMDTA director or manager to investigate what has happened. This will normally be the director or manager in charge of the area of work in question.
- If a manager has been directly involved in the complaint, a director will investigate.

- If a complaint is made involving a director, another director will investigate.
- Complaints involving the NIMDTA chief executive or dean will be investigated by the chairman.
- Complaints involving the chairman will be investigated by the deputy chairman
- **A letter containing NIMDTA's official response, will be sent to you from the investigator within 28 days of your initial complaint arriving at NIMDTA.** If in exceptional circumstances, NIMDTA cannot meet the 20 working day deadline, we will write to you to explain why and give a new deadline for the response.

Stage 2:

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint and want to contact NIMDTA again, the NIMDTA chief executive will normally handle stage 2 of the complaint process.
- If the original complaint involves the chief executive or chairman a independent third party will handle stage 2.
- A response will be sent to you within 28 days of NIMDTA receiving your second letter.
- If you wish to take legal action and notify us of this intention, the complaints procedure will be stopped at that point.
- If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, you can take your complaint to the parliamentary commissioner for administration (parliamentary ombudsman).

HOW YOU CAN HELP NIMDTA IMPROVE ITS COMPLAINTS POLICY

- You may receive a survey within 10 working days of NIMDTA sending you the response to your complaint. Any comments you make will:
 - help us improve the complaints policy and the way NIMDTA works
 - help monitor the impact of the complaints policy on the promotion of race equality and equal opportunities. You can still send back your comments without filling in this part of the form

NIMDTA CONTACTS FOR COMPLAINTS

Please address your complaint to the complaints coordinator.

ADDRESS

Ms Roisin Campbell (Complaints Coordinator)

NIMDTA

`Beechill House'

40 Beechill Road

Belfast

BT8 7RS

TELEPHONE

028 90492731 direct dial

028 90644173 text phone

FAX

028 9064 2279

EMAIL

nicpmde@nicpmde.gov.uk

ADDITIONAL ADVICE WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT

When making a complaint by letter, you should try to include:

1. your name and contact details
2. who or what has caused your concerns
3. when and where the event happened
4. what results you would like to have

You also should keep accurate records of:

1. telephone calls related to the complaint. Who you spoke to, when and what the calls were about
2. all your papers and correspondence relating to the complaint
3. details of any visits or meetings

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NIMDTA COMPLAINT FORM

NOTES ON FILLING IN THIS FORM

You can use this form to write down the complaint you have about the work of NIMDTA, its staff or agents. This form does not cover complaints about the National Health Service (NHS)

Please fill in as much as you can on the form, and send it to the complaints coordinator. NIMDTAs address and other ways to contact us are on Page 7. We may need to contact you for more information.

Thank you

DETAILS OF THE PERSON MAKING THE COMPLAINT

Name of person filling in the form.....

Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr / Prof/ other (please circle)

Address

.....Post code

.....

Daytime telephone number

.....

Date.....

Are you writing on behalf of someone else? Yes / No

If you are writing on behalf of someone else, we may need to ask consent from that person, before we are able to investigate the complaint. Who are you writing on behalf of?

Name..... Relationship to you

Do you need the response in a different language or format? Yes / No

If yes, please state the preferred language or format

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THE COMPLAINT

To help us investigate the complaint, please try and answer the questions below

What is your complaint about? Please use extra paper if needed.

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.....
.....

Was anyone else involved? Yes / No If yes are you able to provide their names?

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Where did the incident or problem happen?

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When did the incident or problem happen?

.....

Is there anything else you want to add and what would you like to happen? Please use a separate piece of paper if needed.

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Signed by :..... Date:.....

DATA PROTECTION

Your completed complaint form will be used by NIMDTA for the purposes of dealing with your complaint and sending the response to you at the address given. An anonymous survey may also be sent to you, to be used for the purposes of monitoring how NIMDTA's complaints policy is working and reviewing it. NIMDTA is the "data controller" of the information you supply on the complaint form. Any queries you have about this should be directed to the Complaints Coordinator.

Thank you for filling in this form.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Complaint reference number:
Date acknowledgement due:	Date response due:
Named investigator:	Date for survey: