



Health Service Executive

Guidance for the Appointment of Complaints Officers and Review Officers

Your Service Your Say, The Management of Service User Feedback for Comments, Compliments and Complaints, HSE Policy 2017

National Complaints Governance & Learning Team

Note: This document is intended as a guide only to support the appointment process. The information contained in this guide is accurate as at 07.02.2025.

1.0 Appointment of Complaints Officers and Review Officers

It is the role and responsibility of Regional Executive Officers of Health Regions and National Directors of relevant National Services to ensure that Complaints Officers and Review Officers have been appointed within their respective administrative area.

At **Health Region** level, this function can be delegated by the Regional Executive Officer to their Integrated Healthcare Area Managers and further sub-delegated by IHA Managers to Heads of Service as appropriate.

It is recommended that the numbers of appointed Complaint Officers within a Health Region is kept to the minimum needed to ensure a timely response to complaints received but also to ensure that the Officers appointed deal with complaints in sufficient volume to build experience and expertise. In addition, those appointed as Complaints Officers should have sufficient seniority to discharge the role. (Please see Your Service Your Say policy for the roles and responsibilities of Complaints Officers and Review Officers)

For **national services**, National Directors can delegate this function to their Assistant National Directors or be further sub-delegated as appropriate.

2.0 Appointment Templates

The form versions referred to in this guidance are correct as at February 2025. Please check with the National Delegations Office for the current version at the time of completion.

2.1 Timeframe

Appointment Templates now include a '**from - to date**'. It is recommended that end dates of appointments are recorded and appointments reviewed at that time to ensure that the appointment is still appropriate. The recommended duration for appointment is three years.

2.2 Revocation

Where an appointment is no longer deemed appropriate the Complaints Officer / Review Officer should be issued with an **Appointment Revocation Notification** [QF.09.01 (b) *Appointment Revocation Notification*]. A copy of the Appointment Revocation Notification should be issued and stored as per the Appointment Orders.

3.0 Health Regions

Integrated Healthcare Area Managers with the delegated authority of their Regional Executive Officer, **or** Heads of Service / Hospital Managers with the sub-delegated authority of the IHA Manager, must complete the following appointment templates to appoint Complaints Officers and Review Officers:

- **Appointment of Complaints Officers pursuant to Article 5(1) of the Health Act 2004 (Complaints) Regulations, 2006. [QF 09.01 Appointment of Complaints Officer V1]**
- **Appointment of Review Officers pursuant to Article 5(2) of the Health Act 2004 (Complaints) Regulations, 2006. [QF.09.01(a) Appointment of Review Officer V1]**

Sub-Delegation No.

The Sub-Delegation No. referred to in the forms relates to the sub-delegation number that Integrated Healthcare Area (IHA) Managers would have received from their Regional Executive Officer of their Health Region to act as IHA Manager.

Where IHA Managers have issued sub delegations to their Heads of Services or Hospital Managers, then they can complete appointment orders for Complaints Officers and Review Officers and insert that sub-delegation number.

Similarly, for national services, the sub delegation number relates to the delegation received from the National Director or from an Assistant National Director.

4.0 Voluntary Hospitals

This guidance does not extend to Voluntary Hospitals. As a Service Provider, Voluntary Hospitals are responsible for the appointment of Complaints/Review Officers under their own governance arrangements.

5.0 National Services

The appointment of Complaints Officers and Review Officers within relevant national services (for example PCRS, National Screening Services, National Ambulance Services, etc.) will need to be made by the relevant delegated National Director, delegated Assistant National Director or another manager under a sub-delegation.

The National Delegations Office can advise a Manager or Director of a national service if they have delegated authority to appoint Complaints Officers / Review Officers.

6.0 Issuing and Storage

Once completed, the original Appointment Order must be sent to the Complaints Officer / Review Officer with a copy held by the office issuing the order and a further copy sent to the following:

1. the **Complaints Manager** for filing.
 - a. Where no Complaints Manager has been appointed at Health Region level, a copy should be issued to the Assistant National Director for Communications and Public Affairs for the Health Region
 - b. Similarly where no Complaints Manager has been identified at national service level, then the forms are held by the office of the National Director / Assistant National Director for the relevant national service.
2. **National Complaints Governance and Learning Team at nationalcglthse.ie only** where the Complaints Officer or Review Officer is accessing the Complaints Management System (CMS) as part of the governance for the CMS and where the Review Officer is attending for Review Officer training.

The same process should be followed for Appointment Revocation Notifications.

7.0 Public Awareness of Complaints Procedures

Under Regulation 19 **Public Awareness of Complaints Procedures** of the Health Act 2004 (Complaints) Regulations 2006

(<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/si/652/made/en/print>) it states:

The Executive, service providers and bodies to whom or persons to which the Executive has assigned its functions under section 49(4) shall make publicly available information on their complaints and review procedures, as appropriate, including-

- (i) the names and contact details of all complaints officers,*
- (ii) the names of all review officers*
- (iii) the procedures, if any, available under Regulation 8 (2), and*
- (iv) advice on all matters relevant to making a complaint or seeking a review.*

Please ensure that online information on your service contains a section on, or link to, how to provide feedback and the procedures involved, as well as a listing of the **names and contact details** of your appointed Complaints Officers and **names only** of your appointed Review Officers.

Please include the date that the information is valid as of, and insert the date that the information will be next reviewed and updated.

For your listing of Review Officers, you may also wish to outline that it will be the local Complaints Manager that will assign a Review Officer to any review request received.

8.0 Change of post for Complaints Officers or Review Officers

It is important that Complaints Officers and Review Officers are advised of their requirement to notify the following should they leave or change their post for any reason.

- The person or office from whom they received their Appointment Order
- Complaints Manager for their Health Region or National Division.
 - Where no Complaints Manager has been appointed at Health Region level, the Assistant National Director for Communications and Public Affairs should be advised.
 - Similarly where no Complaints Manager has been identified at national service level, then the National Director / Assistant National Director for the relevant national service should be advised.
- The National Complaints Governance and Learning Team (nationalcglit@hse.ie) as appropriate, as part of the governance for the CMS.
- Local Consumer Affairs Office

9.0 Appointment Forms

Copies of the most up to date appointment forms for Complaints Officers and Review Officers can be requested from the National Delegations Office.

10.0 Further Information

Further queries regarding appointments can be directed to the National Delegations Office at delegationsoffice@hse.ie

The National Complaints Governance and Learning Team can be contacted on nationalcglit@hse.ie