



Learning Forms Guidance

Service User feedback, including complaints, is a valuable source of information on how services are performing. A key objective of the revised *Your Service Your Say, The Management of Service User Feedback* policy, is to encourage feedback, learn from it and share learning this across hospital and community health sectors.

Valuing feedback is a cornerstone of the newly revised policy and process. Managers, at all levels, should encourage and assist all staff in understanding and using feedback as an essential source of information to support on-going improvements to services.

Linking complaints with learning and improvement is an important way of assuring safety and quality of care. According to Don Berwick, an international leader in patient safety and healthcare quality, *"in the discovery of imperfection lies the chance for processes to improve"*. Berwick also said: *"the best way to reduce harm is to embrace wholeheartedly a culture of learning"*.

While there is a necessity to learn and improve as a result of feedback and complaints, there must also be a focus on learning from the recommendations arising from complaints investigations, and making meaningful service improvements as a result. This focus on organisational learning is a vital way for Hospital Groups and Community Healthcare Organisations to encourage a culture of welcoming feedback and complaints and using these as a positive driver for service improvement and delivery as well as informing resource allocation.

In 2015, the Office of the Ombudsman, in their *'Learning to Get Better'* report, looked at how the HSE handles complaints across public hospitals. In particular, it looked at how well the HSE listens to the feedback and whether the HSE is learning from this to improve the services provided. The report identified that there was often a difficulty in getting internal feedback on the outcome of complaints; leading staff and public to believe that nothing happens as a result of complaining. This report outlined the need for a focus on *sharing the learning* when it comes to complaints.

The report also recommended that complaint outcomes, which lead to service improvements and changes in procedures, should be shared among both staff and public. A key focus within the revised *Your Service You Say* policy is learning from complaints and also ensuring procedures are implementation to assist in sharing this learning.

Complaints Managers are appointed in each Hospital Group and Community Healthcare Organisation to champion the feedback process and to co-ordinate the learning from individual complaint investigations and reviews to ensure that this is communicated across services and to both staff and the public. One platform used to enable this is the Complaint Managers Governance and Learning Forum. This forum is a formal network of Complaints Managers and other professional bodies, for example, Office of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children. The Forum is designed to ensure learning and best practice is shared throughout the organisation. The Forum supports the Complaints Managers role of ensuring that lessons learned from complaints are used to improve the service and that those lessons are shared with peers.

What's New?

New forms have been developed to assist staff in capturing any learning they encounter while investigating/responding to a complaint and subsequently enabling this learning to be shared within the organisation. An explanation summary on *how to & who should* complete these forms is outlined below:



Learning at the Point of Contact

HSE Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form

Resolution Section: To be completed by any staff member who has resolved a service user's complaint at point of contact.

Purpose: All HSE staff must aim to resolve complaints they receive at first point of contact, if possible. Feedback (comments, compliments and complaints) may be given to any member of staff, it is therefore important that all staff welcome feedback and are supported to respond appropriately to feedback from Service Users. It is important that all staff see this as an opportunity to improve local services. Any staff member resolving a complaint at the point of contact should document the complaint on this form. The Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form should be made available to all staff so that any staff member can record the complaint and the action taken to resolve it. Recording these complaints ensures that trends and learning can be identified and shared.

Who is the form sent to on completion?

The completed Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form should be given to Line Managers so that they can, in turn, identify trends and share any learning as appropriate.

Escalation Section: To be completed by Line Managers where a complaint cannot be resolved at the point of contact.

Purpose: If the Line Manager is unable to resolve a complaint at the point of contact (within 48 hours) they should complete the escalation section of the Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form with the Complainant and, if agreed, escalate the matter to the relevant Complaints Officer.

Who is the form sent to on completion?

The Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form is sent to the relevant Complaints Officer. The Line Manager should also keep a copy securely so that they can identify trends and share any learning as appropriate.

Complaints Officers and Learning

HSE Your Service Your Say Anonymised Complaint Learning Notification Form

To be completed by: Complaints Officers, **only** in cases where learning has been identified from a complaint that was concluded either informally or after a formal investigation has taken place.

Purpose: Where a Complaints Officer considers there is valuable learning from a complaint that was concluded either informally or formally at Stage 2, the Complaints Officer must complete an Anonymised Complaint Learning Notification Form. This form should be completed **only where** the Complaint Officer identifies valuable learning for the local service and should be anonymised. The learning identified may also have relevance for the wider organisation.

Who is this form sent to on completion?

The anonymised Learning Notification Form is sent to the relevant Complaints Manager who will circulate within their CHO / Hospital / Hospital Group as appropriate.

HSE Your Service Your Say Anonymised Complaint Learning Summary Casebook

To be completed by: Complaints Officers at the end of each quarterly reporting period to highlight learning from complaint investigations that have relevance for the wider organisation.

Purpose: The Complaints Officer is required at the end of each quarterly reporting period to develop an anonymised Learning Summary Casebook within their respective areas of responsibility. This casebook should contain brief summaries of a selection of cases where the issues could affect others and where learning is applicable across the service.

Who is this casebook sent to upon completion?

This casebook should be sent to the relevant Complaints Manager for appropriate circulation but **is not** for publication.

Complaints Officers should also use this casebook to share learning with fellow Complaints Officers at the Complaints Officers Governance and Learning Forum. (To be established by Consumer Affairs)

Review Officers and Learning

HSE Your Service Your Say Anonymised Complaint Learning Notification Form

To be completed by: Review Officers, **only** in cases where learning has been identified from a complaint that was concluded either informally or after a formal investigation has taken place.

Purpose: The main role of the Review Officer to determine the appropriateness of the investigation conducted and the recommendations made by a Complaints Officer. During their investigation they may carry out a fresh examination of files and papers and fresh interviews if appropriate. Where a Review Officer considers there is valuable learning from a complaint that was concluded either informally or formally at Stage 2, the Review Officer must complete an Anonymised Complaint Learning Notification Form. This form should be completed **only where** the Review Officer identifies valuable learning for the local service and should be anonymised. The learning identified may also have relevance for the wider organisation.

Who is this form sent to on completion?

The Anonymised Learning Notification Form is sent to the relevant Complaints Manager who will circulate as appropriate within their CHO / Hospital / Hospital Group.

Complaint Managers and Learning

HSE Your Service Your Say Anonymised Complaint Learning Summary Casebook

To be completed by: Complaints Managers at the end of each quarterly period to highlight learning generated following receipt of the **Anonymised Learning Notification Forms** from Review Officers and receipt of **Anonymised Learning Summary Casebooks** from the Complaints Officers.

Purpose: The purpose of the Anonymised Learning Summary Casebook is to capture and share those complaints where there is valuable learning for the organisation on how the complaints were investigated and concluded. The casebook should contain brief summaries of complaints received and how they were concluded/resolved, outlining any resulting service improvements.

Who receives the Casebook? Anonymised Learning Summary Casebooks should be made universally available. The anonymised casebooks developed by the Complaint Managers will be **published online** by the National Complaints Governance and Learning Team.

Complaints Managers will also share these casebooks at the Complaints Managers Governance and Learning Forum. The Forum supports the Complaints Managers role of ensuring that lessons learned from complaints are used to improve the service and that those lessons are shared with peers.

WHAT IS THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ANONYMISED LEARNING NOTIFICATION FORM AND THE ANONYMISED LEARNING SUMMARY CASEBOOK? The **Anonymised LEARNING NOTIFICATION FORM** is used to record any local learning identified by Complaints Officers and Review Officers. The **Anonymised LEARNING SUMMARY CASEBOOK** is used as a platform to share cases where organisational learning has been identified.

Below are just some examples of learning that could be captured on the *Anonymised Learning Notification Forms*. Casebooks (both Complaints Officers and Complaints Managers) are developed from these forms. The learning identified can be service specific, organisation wide or for national consideration.

Examples of Learning:

Issue / Recommendation: Complainant felt that they were not supported at the Point of Contact. It was recommended that staff receive training on their role in the Point of Contact Complaint process.

Key Learning (wider service or organisation implication): Point of Contact complaints training should be completed by all current staff and by new staff when commencing in the area as part of their induction. The online HSELand module should be utilised pending training provided by Consumer Affairs. In addition, an annual training needs analysis should be conducted to identify the required relevant training for staff to attend or to complete on HSELand.

Issue / Recommendation: Clarification regarding a point of discussion was sought by a person following their attendance at a meeting but no minute of the meeting was taken so issue could not be verified. It was recommended that staff should be made aware of the need to record meeting minutes, how to do this and the importance of same.

Key Learning (wider service or organisation implication): Ensure staff and managers are familiar with the HSE Communications Toolkit and the guidance provided. Highlight this resource at induction. Ensure that key guidance documents are reviewed by staff. An annual training needs analysis should be conducted to identify the required relevant training for staff to attend or to complete on HSELand.

Overview

Learning Forms and Casebooks

POINT OF CONTACT COMPLAINT RECEIVED

Received by any staff member who will try to resolve immediately or escalate to Line Manager to resolve within two working days.



POINT OF CONTACT RESOLUTION AND ESCALATION FORM

Resolution Section: Completed by any staff member (including Line Manager) who has resolved a service user's complaint at point of contact & forwarded to Line Manager for identification of trends /learning to be shared with Service Manager.

Escalation Section: Completed by Line Manager when unable to resolve a complaint at the point of contact (within two working days) & forwarded to Complaints Officer. Line Manager to keep a copy to identify trends.

Line Manager to highlight trends and learning to Service Manager.

Complaints Officer / Review Officer
Informal Resolution or Formal investigation



ANONYMISED COMPLAINT LEARNING NOTIFICATION FORM

Completed by Complaints Officers & Review Officers after each investigation / review where learning is identified.
Form sent to Complaints Manager who will bring trends / issues to the attention of relevant Service Managers

Complaints Officer / Complaints Manager



ANONONYMISED LEARNING SUMMARY CASEBOOK

Compiled quarterly by Complaints Officers and issued to Complaints Manager.

Complaints Manager to bring key learning to the attention of CHO /HG Senior Management

Compiled quarterly by Complaints Managers from Complaints Officers' Anonymised Learning Summary Casebooks and Review Officers' Anonymised Learning Notification Forms.

Complaints Managers' Casebook to be made universally available and published online quarterly by NCGLT

Appendices (see email attachments for Forms)

- Appendix 1 Point of Contact Complaint Resolution and Escalation Form
- Appendix 2 Anonymised Complaints Learning Notification Form
- Appendix 3 Complaints Officer's Anonymised Learning Summary Casebook Template
- Appendix 4 Complaints Manager's Anonymised Learning Summary Casebook Template