

Title: USAIS Complaints Procedure

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 Issued by: USAIS
 Review: 2 years
 Owner: Director/MTL

Revision Date	What has been changed;	Reviewer
June 2017	New directive/Wording	
November 2022	Contact details updated	CAV
January 2023	Format and contact details updated	MJA
	Changes to wording and timelines to match University; stronger alignment with NHS complaint guidance.	MJA/CAV

Introduction

This procedure applies to the Auditory Implant Service, at the University of Southampton. It applies to complaints from users of its patient services.

Philosophy

We recognise the value of suggestions, constructive criticism and complaints. Feedback, both negative and positive, improves patient care. We will respond quickly and sensitively to all such complaints. We will endeavour to resolve any issues first at a local level and if this does not reach satisfactory outcome, there will be independent review. If you are unhappy with the service you have received, it is worthwhile discussing your concerns early on. You may feel more comfortable speaking to someone not directly involved in your care.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with any part of the service offered. It may be verbal (face to face or on the telephone), written or complex involving others, such as external medical personnel, MPs, solicitors or advocates representing service users.

Verbal complaints

Complaints received by front line staff about minor matters should ideally be resolved as they arise. Good manners and polite responses should be expected at all times. Staff should attempt to resolve these issues to prevent them from escalating into formal complaints. It might be necessary to ask for the intervention of a line manager or team lead at times.

Formal complaints

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should be advised to write to the manager of the service as below; this can be by letter or email. Complaints should be made within 12 months of the incident taking place.

When making a complaint, please include if possible:

- The service user's name and date of birth
- Details of what happened, when and where

- The names of any staff involved
- Your specific concerns
- Any questions you would like answered
- What you hope to see as a result of your complaint
- Written consent to confirm that you are happy for the management team to investigate

The complaint will be recorded in the complaints register (J:\AIS\Team Leaders\Incident Reporting Forms\Complaints) and acknowledged within five working days. The matter will be dealt with by the relevant manager or Director in consultation with any members of staff who have been involved with the issues referred to in the complaint. A full written response will be sent out answering the complaint within 30 days. You will be informed if the investigation will take longer. A meeting can be arranged to discuss the issues raised if needed.

You can expect to have your complaint acknowledged and properly looked into. You should also:

- be kept informed of progress and told the outcome
- be treated fairly, politely and with respect
- be sure that your care and treatment will not be affected as a result of making a complaint
- be offered the opportunity to discuss the complaint with a complaints manager
- expect appropriate action to be taken following your complaint

If dissatisfied with the response, the complaint will be offered a review by the Associate Dean for Enterprise, Faculty of Engineering and the Environment. If this does not resolve the issue another independent review will be carried out by the Deputy or Pro Vice Chancellor with responsibility for Ethics at the University of Southampton.

If you are still not happy with the response provided, you can ask an independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to look at your complaint

Monitoring

A record of all formal complaints will be maintained. A summary will be sent to the AIS Governance Board twice a year.

Consent

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else (unless you are the person's parent or other legal guardian), we will need their consent to proceed.

Staff responsibility

All staff should seek to understand the complaint, respond sympathetically and quickly but not agree to any course of action that is outside their remit. Staff should seek to communicate with the complainant, although this will cease if staff are threatened or abused. The matter should be referred on to the appropriate manager as required.

All complaints will be treated with in strict confidence and will not impact patient care.

The AIS Complaints Procedure will be accessible via our website and available in the clinic reception area.

Contacts:

General comments and minor issues can be sent to our monitored mailbox and will be dealt with by the appropriate person:

ais@southampton.ac.uk

Formal complaints/complaints regarding a clinical issue/serious untoward event

Professor Carl Verschuur
Director
University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service
Highfield
Southampton
SO17 1BJ
c.a.verschuur@soton.ac.uk

To escalate a complaint

Professor Clinton Styles
Associate Dean Enterprise: Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Professorial Fellow: Enterprise
University of Southampton
Highfield
Southampton SO17 1BJ
c.styles@soton.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can direct a complaint directly to NHS England, who commission services from the Auditory Implant Service. Contact information can be found at
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/complainin-g-to-nhse/>