

Policy

It is the policy of Tissue and Eye Services (TES) to manage complaints efficiently and record and monitor outcomes. TES is committed to using comments and complaints as a means to improve the service to users of TES products and services and to promote excellence in customer service. In accordance with NHS Blood and Transplant's (NHSBT) requirements for corporate and clinical governance, the NHS Complaints Procedure and standards set by the NHSLA Risk Management standards for Trusts, TES will maintain an effective complaints and incident management system. This will be managed by:

- Identifying and recording all contacts received from users of TES products and services.
- Identifying and recording any comments made by users of the service which the user would like to be considered. This comment may result from an incident a customer feels should be considered as a near miss.
- Taking prompt action to mitigate any immediate risks identified.
- Taking prompt action, in line with NHSBT and TES standards, to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the user.
- Reviewing contacts at department level and overall service level.
- Assessing whether errors or non-conformance has occurred as a result of systems failure.

Taking appropriate corrective and preventative action to improve the performance of the systems in light of the assessment.

For family impact complaints, please follow SOP6005.

Objective

To learn, systematically and consistently, from errors and mistakes in order to continually improve the safety and quality of TES products and services.

Changes in this version

Update of job titles within roles and reference to Q-Pulse 5 is removed due to version updates. Reference to SOP6005 Complaints and Compliments User Guide added for handling family impact complaints.

Roles

All TES Staff

- Report or document **all** complaints to your manager
- Report any comments at the request of the customer.

Head of Sales and Marketing

- Ensure this procedure is followed by all TES staff
- Ensure review of contacts at national level
- Ensure information on contacts is available for review at department level
- Determine and implement any national corrective and preventative action across TES.
- Ensure the TES Customer Care Team review national trends in contacts and take appropriate action.

Customer Care Team

- Ensure contacts are managed in accordance with SOP4951
- Ensure all incidents are categorised and sub-categorised as appropriate
- Complaints are escalated to the appropriate TES Manager if required
- **Encourage TES Managers and Stage Action Owners to resolve Stage Actions assigned to them within 15 working days, which allows calls to be resolved within 20 working days**
- Ensure that responses are complete, open and honest.

TES Operational Management Team

- Ensure individual contacts are reviewed and drive forward resolutions.
- Ensure trends in contacts are reviewed and action is taken by staff where appropriate.
- Work with the quality function to undertake root cause analysis of trends highlighted in accordance with MPD387

Centre Clinical Team

- Review any contacts that have been categorised as a Patient Adverse Event

NHS Commissioner

- Where complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigated the contact will be

All TES Managers

- **referred for the NHS Commissioner who will conduct a case review**
- Ensure incidents are documented and assessed and any immediate risk mitigated.
- **All TES Managers**
- Ensure incidents are documented and assessed and any immediate risk mitigated and implemented.
- Ensure any departmental corrective and preventative action is determined and implemented.
- Ensure responses to Q-PULSE complaints are timely and include sufficient information to ensure a clear explanation of the cause to be fed back to the customer.
- Ensure all staff are trained appropriately in accordance with functional quality documents. Any lack of training, revealed by a customer contact, results in re-training where needed.
- Ensure all actions taken are recorded.
- Ensure Stage Actions assigned to individual managers are adequately resolved within 15 working days.
- Inform and liaise with Quality Assurance Managers, Local Specialists Consultants or Customer Care Team as required.
- Ensure Quality Assurance Managers review calls and events and raise Quality Incidents as required.
- Ensure that trends highlighted within their activities are investigated and resolved.
- **Work with the quality function to undertake root cause analysis of trends highlighted in accordance with MPD387**
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Requirements

- Access to Business Objects reporting software.

Process Description

1. Initial Contact Reporting.

- i.* TES actively encourages users of TES products and services (customers) to contact the organisation and comment on the service provided as a key method of improving the service. TES promotes this reporting through normal day to day contact with customers by a range of staff who deal with customers as part of their work and by the publication of this Management Progress Description to customers.
- ii.* A user of TES products and services can contact any member of TES about the service they have received. Reporting may occur by telephone, letter, email, in person or using TES Customer Contact Form FRM5340.
- iii.* It is intended that TES investigates customer contacts within 20 working days of an initial contact. TES aims to resolve 85% of these contacts in line with NHSBT recommendations. This restriction maybe waived providing it would be pertinent and will allow an extended investigation that will add to the response made. In order that TES can reach this standard TES Managers assigned events originating from a contact have 15 working days to respond. This provides the Customer Care Team a further 5 working days in which to collate these responses and write a formal response when required.
- iv.* The member of staff receiving the contact will either undertake the recording investigation **themselves** or will refer the contact to a senior member of staff within their department. The department manager should be informed as soon as possible and will be responsible for an investigation within their department.

2. Categorisation of Contacts

The primary purpose of contact categorisation is to group contacts together allowing for appropriate review and meaningful allocation of resources. This categorisation maybe on the basis of the seriousness of a contact in the case of Patient Adverse Events or a particular area of service.

- i.* The contact should be categorised as a Patient Adverse Event if the incident has caused actual or potential harm to a patient or user. In this case it should be reported immediately to a member of the Centre Clinical Team in accordance with MPD1.
- ii.* Any incident which may have caused harm to a patient or user or caused product to be dispatched incorrectly or resulted in an inability to provide products and/or services, even if it did not do so on this occasion, should also be reported as a quality incident according to MPD1.
- iii.* In circumstances where an incident may indicate a general failure of the supply of products and services to users, the incident should be escalated to Senior Management.

3. Recording of contacts/comments and responses to the customer.

- i.* All contacts and comments must be sent to the Customer Care Team within 1 working day by the person receiving the contact. The Customer Care Team will log the contact on to the **Q-Pulse**. Customers will receive an initial contact within 5 working days of the complaint.
- ii.* Where a full response can be provided within 5 working days of receipt of the contact no acknowledgement is necessary.
- iii.* The department responsible for the activity which is the subject of the contact will investigate it. This will involve the responsible person gathering whatever information and documentation necessary to ensure a thorough investigation and appropriate action taken. This will include summaries of statements and discussions. The confidentiality of patients will be respected at all times.
- iv.* The Department Manager for the area within which the activity occurred will undertake appropriate investigation in accordance with SOP4591.
- v.* Should an incident cause a follow-up investigation then the Customer Care Team will record all relevant information regarding the contact to ensure the follow up conclusions can be actioned effectively.
- vi.* The investigation of the contact may require interaction with the customer or other external organisations. In these cases the investigator must discuss the approach with the Customer Care Manager to ensure the appropriate individual is contacted and the manner of the approach is appropriate.
- vii.* The complaint will be logged on to **Q-Pulse** and will also be assigned to the Centre Quality Assurance Manager or deputy who will maintain an overview of contacts regarding that Centre and ensure that where the Quality Incident Procedure is initiated, these are successfully closed in accordance with MPD1. If the Quality Assurance Manager does not believe a contact has been concluded appropriately, **they** will intervene and ensure the appropriate corrective and preventative action has been undertaken.
- viii.* The standard response is to ensure customers will receive a follow-up contact explaining the preventative and corrective actions within 20 working days of the receipt of the contact. The Customer Care Team is responsible for responding to the customer within this timescale. In this communication the Customer Care Manager will provide the customer with a detailed explanation of the investigation and the outcome. For some complaints, it may not be possible to complete all actions within 20 days, so a final letter may be required when all actions are concluded. Also, details of the procedure to follow should the customer be unsatisfied with the outcome will be included. This final contact will be agreed with the customer during the acknowledgement communication when the complaint was received.

4. Further action should the response not satisfy the User.

- i.* If the customer is not satisfied that the contact has been investigated appropriately or that the corrective and preventative actions are not appropriate they may refer the contact to the Tissue Bank Manager who will investigate further and respond to the customer.
- ii.* If the customer remains unsatisfied with the response they can further refer the complaint to the General Manager for Tissue and Eye Services who will act as an independent reviewer of the contact in accordance with MPD677.
- iii.* If the user continues to be dissatisfied, the contact can finally be referred to the NHS Commissioner.

5. Review of Contacts

- i.* Using reporting software (Business Objects) TES will distribute reports covering the contacts received for review both contacts internally and externally.
- ii.* Each department will review these complaints and will be the department's responsibility to monitor trends in contacts and ensure appropriate action is taken to resolve issues revealed.
- iii.* The Customer Care Team will review individual contacts, and review actions taken or drive forward the resolution of contacts that are not closed. The findings of the review will be shared with the Department Manager. Where trends are identified these will be referred to the Department Manager responsible for that activity. The Department Manager will be responsible for working with the quality function to undertake root cause analysis in accordance with MPD387.

6. System Development

- i.* The Customer Care Team (CCT) will also be responsible for ensuring the contacts system is working effectively. The CCT will review the system regularly and initiate any actions which may be necessary to ensure the continued effectiveness of the system.

Definitions

- **TES** - Tissue and Eye Services
- **CCT** - Customer Care Team
- **PDI** - Post Donation Incident
- **NHS** - National Health Service
- **NHSLA** - NHS Litigation Authority
- **NHSBT** - NHS Blood and Transplant
- **Root Cause Analysis** - A structured investigation that aims to identify the true cause of a problem and the actions necessary to eliminate it.
- **Complaint** - An incident which has resulted in a statement of dissatisfaction or the reporting of a problem with TES, its products or services from a user (patients or representatives) or member of the general public
- **Quality Incident** - Anything in a process which should not be happening and could affect product quality, patient safety or could significantly affect supply. This includes cumulative events, which individually are recorded as "Comments"
- **Comments** - A statement either negative or positive made by a user (patient, relative or their representatives) of the TES product or service which they wish to be considered by TES. Comments may not result from an actual problem with TES products or services.
- **Stage Actions** - A Stage Action is part of a contact or complaint assigned to the manager of a department for investigation and where required appropriate corrective action in that department.

Related Documents / References

- **SOP4951** - TES Customer Care managing customer complaints using Qpulse
- **SOP6005** - Complaints and Compliments User Guide
- **MPD677** - NHSBT Complaints
- **MPD1** - Manage Change
- **MPD387** - Root Cause Analysis of Events
- **FRM5340** - Tissue and Eye Services Customer Contact Form

Appendices

- None