



Emergency Medical Services (Hutt Valley Ltd)

Complaints Policy

Date Adopted: 16 December 2015
Last Review: Not applicable
Next Review: December 2016

The Board of Emergency Medical Services (Hutt Valley) Ltd (EMS) has consulted with management in the formulation of this policy.

1) Introduction / Purpose

EMS, trading as the Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre, acknowledges the rights of the patient as outlined within the Health and Disability Commissioner's Code of Rights.

Health and Disability Commissioner's Code of Rights

1. To be treated with respect.
2. To be treated fairly without pressure or discrimination.
3. The right to dignity and independence.
4. To receive a quality service and to be treated with care and skill.
5. To be given information that you can understand in a way that helps you to communicate with the person providing the service.
6. To be given the information you need to know about your health or disability; the service being provided and the names and roles of the staff; as well as information about any tests and procedures you need and any test results. In New Zealand, people are encouraged to ask questions and to ask for more information to help them understand what is going on.
7. To make your own decision about your care, and to change your mind.
8. To have a support person with you at most times.
9. To have all these rights apply if you are asked to take part in a research study or teaching session for training staff.
10. The right to complain and have your complaint taken seriously.

EMS views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person(s) who has made the complaint.

2) Definitions

Complaint – A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of EMS and/or the Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre.

3) Policy Purpose

- 3.1 To provide a complaints procedure that is fair, clear, and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- 3.2 To publicise the existence of the complaints procedure so that people know how to contact EMS to make a complaint;
- 3.3 To make sure everyone at the Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- 3.4 To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and timely;
- 3.5 To make sure that, whenever possible, complaints are resolved and relationships repaired;
- 3.6 To gather information that helps EMS to improve what it does.

4) Where Can Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person(s) or organisation(s) who have a legitimate interest in either EMS and/or the Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email, or in writing.

5) Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know, and following any relevant data protection / privacy requirements.

6) Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the General Manager.

7) Approval

As part of its approval, the Board requires the General Manager to circulate this policy to all staff, and to include a copy of it in the EMS Policy Manual, copies of which shall be available to all staff.

The company's Policy Manual shall also be made available to shareholding and contracted doctors, at their request. The Board requires that the General Manager arrange for all new staff to be made familiar with this policy and other policies approved by the Board.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. H. ...', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair

16th December 2015

Date



Emergency Medical Services (Hutt Valley Ltd)

Complaints Procedure

1. Contact Details for Complaints

1.1 Written / Emailed Complaints: Written or emailed complaints may be sent to:

General Manager
Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre
PO Box 44-108
Lower Hutt
Wellington

Email: generalmanager@afterhoursmed.co.nz

1.2 Verbal Complaints: Verbal complaints may be made by telephone (04) 567-5646, or in person to any of the Lower Hutt After Hour's staff located at the medical Centre at 727 High St, Lower Hutt.

2. Receiving Complaints

2.1 Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

2.2 Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded - refer to attached Complaint Form.

2.3 When handling complains verbally:

- 2.3.1 Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation.
- 2.3.2 Listen. Allow the person to talk about the complaint in his or her own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam".
- 2.3.3 Do not debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry.
- 2.3.4 Show an interest in what is being said.
- 2.3.5 When necessary, ask for clarification.
- 2.3.6 Reflect back what you have noted to show that you understand the complaint.
- 2.3.7 Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable). You can do this without making a comment

on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the Lower Hutt After Hours Medical Centre – for example, “I understand that this situation is frustrating for you”.

- 2.3.8 Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue.
- 2.3.9 Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take, and what it will involve.
- 2.3.10 Do not promise things you cannot deliver.
- 2.3.11 If a request cannot be met, give clear and valid reasons.
- 2.3.12 Ensure that the person understands what he or she has been told.
- 2.3.13 Whenever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues for review and/or appeal, those being:

- Written or emailed complaints to Lower Hutt After Hours General Manager (as per clause 1.1); and/or
- The Health and Disability Commissioner:
<http://www.hdc.org.nz/complaints>.

3. Resolving Complaints – Stage 1

- 3.1 In many cases, a complaint is resolved best by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, he or she may be able to resolve it swiftly, and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- 3.2 Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be forwarded to the General Manager within 24 hours.
- 3.3 On receiving the complaint, the General Manager records it in the Complaints Log. If the complaint has not been resolved, either the General Manager or a delegated representative will investigate it and take the appropriate action.
- 3.4 If the complaint relates to specific person, he or she should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- 3.5 Complaints should be acknowledged by either the General Manager or a delegated representative within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- 3.6 A copy of the Complaints Procedure should be attached to the initial response.
- 3.7 Complainants should receive a definite reply with ten (10) working days. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent, with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

- 3.8 Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

4. Resolving Complaints – Stage 2

- 4.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1, he or she can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Board. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board.
- 4.2 The request for a Board-level review should be acknowledged within five (5) working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- 4.3 The Chair may investigate the facts of the case or delegate a suitable senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.
- 4.4 If the complaint relates to specific person, that person should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- 4.5 The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.
- 4.6 Complainants should receive a definite reply within ten (10) working days. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent, with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- 4.7 Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

5. Resolving Complaints – External

- 5.1 The complainant can complain to the Health and Disability Commissioner at any stage.
- 5.2 Information about the Health and Disability Commissioner can be found on: <http://www.hdc.org.nz/complaints>.

6. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

- 6.1 The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest or similar.

7. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

- 7.1 Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends that may indicate a need to take further action.



Emergency Medical Services (Hutt Valley Ltd)

Complaint Form

Part A: Patient's Details

Name:

Address:

Telephone No: (H)

(W):

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else:

Your name:

Your relationship to the patient:

Is the patient aware that you are complaining on his/her behalf?

If someone is representing you (e.g. solicitor, advocate):

Name of your representative:

Organisation:

Postal address:

Telephone No:

Part C: Further information

Have you tried to resolve your complaint in any other way - for example, by obtaining a second medical opinion? If so, please give details.