**Complaints procedure for patients attending the Health and Wellbeing Academy**

**Introduction**

The Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Science (FMHLS) recognises that suggestions, constructive criticisms and complaints can be a valuable source of information in respect of the effectiveness and acceptability of the service that it provides to you. We aim to constantly improve our service and therefore would hope to learn from the feedback you give.

However, sometimes things do go wrong and you may be unhappy about an aspect of the care you have received. In this instance you may wish to make a complaint. This document details the ways of making a complaint and the FMHLS process for managing it so that you are satisfied that your complaint has been investigated thoroughly, fairly and sympathetically and within a timely manner.

**Who can complain?**

If you are receiving or have received treatment from the Health and Wellbeing academy you can complain, regardless of whether you have paid for the service or not. If you are unable to complain for yourself, then a relative, carer or friend can complain on your behalf.

If the complaint is subject to legal action, then the FMHLS will not investigate the complaint until such time as the legal action is resolved.

Students attending work placements within the Academy are directed to use the University’s complaints procedures. Information about this can be found on Canvas/My Studies > my organisations> information for students.

**Timeframe for Complaining**

The time limit for accepting a complaint is normally three months from the date of the event giving rise to it, although it is advisable to make the complaint as soon as possible. However, in certain circumstances where it would have been unreasonable to expect the complaint to have been made earlier and where it is possible to investigate the facts of the case, it may be possible to investigate the complaint outside this three-month time frame.

Occasionally, new information comes to light sometime after an event which then gives rise to a complaint. In these circumstances, it is advisable to make a complaint as soon as the new information becomes available.

**How to Complain**

The FMHLS operates a three-stage complaint process in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Academy:

* Stage One – Informal Complaint
* Stage Two – Formal Complaint
* Stage Three – Appeal Process

**Stage One – Informal Complaint** In the first instance you are encouraged to discuss the issue(s) with the HWBA Lead either face to face or via the telephone. Often this approach can result in an immediate resolution of the matter to your satisfaction.

Where immediate resolution is not possible due to the nature of the issue, the member of staff must report this to the Director of the Health and Wellbeing Academy, who will either investigate the matter or will nominate an individual to investigate the matter and reply to the complainant within 14 working days.

The staff member and/or complainant will complete an ‘informal complaint form’ which will be held at the Academy’s reception area, for the purpose of audit and review by the faculty.

**Stage Two – Formal Complaint** If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage One or wish to formalise your complaint immediately then you will need to send the complaint to us in writing, which can include email. This should be sent to the Director of the Health and Wellbeing Academy who will send an acknowledgement to you within five working days and keep you informed of any developments.

The Director of the Health and Wellbeing Academy may appoint an investigating officer who will gather the necessary information from documentation or via statements from members of staff or students. The Director (or nominee) will then appraise the accumulated information and will make the following recommendations:

* The complaint is not valid, and no further action is required or
* The complaint is valid and action is required

You should receive a response to your complaint within six weeks of initial receipt, detailing the investigation, outcome and any action plan. However if your complaint is complicated then this may take longer but you will be kept informed of the progress.

In any situation where the complaint relates to student conduct, the case may be referred to the faculty Fitness to Practice and Professional Suitability Panel University for discussion and/or appropriate action.

In the situation where the complaint relates to staff conduct, the case may be referred to the University under its ‘Staff Disciplinary Procedures’. If it is considered that the staff member has breached their Code of Practice, the complaint may also be referred to the appropriate Professional or Regulatory Body.

**Stage Three – Appeal Process** If you are not satisfied with the outcome to your complaint in Stage Two, then you can appeal against the outcome in writing to:

Professor Keith Lloyd

Head of Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Science

Swansea University

Singleton Park

Swansea

SA2 8PP

In your letter you should clearly state why you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two procedures.

The Faculty Head will reassess the information and may appoint a nominee to gather further evidence. If thought appropriate, a panel may be convened to re-examine the evidence and to recommend an outcome. You may also be invited to attend this panel.

The Faculty Head will determine the outcome and communicate this to you, normally within four weeks. If it should prove impracticable to determine the outcome within four weeks, you will be informed of the likely timescale. This decision will be final. However, where a satisfactory resolution is proving difficult the Faculty Head may request the assistance of a mediator who will be independent of the faculty. The process for mediation would be determined by the mediator, you and the faculty.

**Other avenues for complaint** The **Community Health Council** is an independent complaints advocacy service which is completely free to anyone who wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of local health whether it is in hospital, general practice or other health care provider. More information can be found at;

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/11979/Community-Health-Council-independent-complaints-advocacy-service>

The **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales** can investigate complaints about public services in Wales, which includes complaints about health services. More information can be found at;

<http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/> The **Health Inspectorate Wales** is an independent watchdog for health services in Wales. More information can be found at [www.hiw.org.uk](http://www.hiw.org.uk)