



Complaint handling procedure

It is important to us that you are happy with the care you receive. However, we are aware that pregnancy and birth are anxious times for you as a family, and sometimes the little things can mount up and spoil your experience if they are not addressed promptly.

If you are not completely happy with any element of the care you are receiving, we urge you to speak directly, as soon as possible to the midwife or health professional caring for you. Often, small misunderstandings regarding appointment times, suggestions or advice, for example, can easily be rectified at the time. It is much better for you to be honest and tell us, fix any problem straight away and everyone to be happy going forward.

If your concerns are more serious, or you feel that you cannot get a resolution by talking to your midwife directly, we want you to contact us as soon as possible. Please don't delay. We ask for your concern in writing so that we have a full record of the issues. You can contact us:

- Via email at info@privatemidwives.com
- By post – Private Midwives, The Heath Business Park, Runcorn, WA7 4QX, UK.

We have a procedure for you to follow so that your complaint can be addressed in a structured manner.

When you raise a concern or complaint to us, we will listen to you, investigate, review your notes, respond to you in writing and outline any remedy and actions that we are going to take.

Private Midwives are members of the Independent Healthcare Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS). Complaints will be handled in accordance with their Code of Practice. A copy can be found here:

<https://www.iscas.org.uk>

The process and timeframes are summarised below. Complaints received outside the timeframes stipulated, without exceptional reasons, will be acknowledged but may not be investigated as the ability of staff members to recall events with accuracy and detail may be compromised.

Confidentiality

You may be raising a complaint on behalf of someone else, for example your partner. In these circumstances we will ask the client for their permission to investigate the concerns raised. Once investigated the response will be addressed back to the client and it will be their decision as to whom they share the response with.

Occasionally, we may ask an external expert to review your care. In such circumstances, your clinical notes will be anonymised. If this is not possible, we will ask your permission to share the details.

Other regulators and what they do

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulates Health and Social Care in England. It collects information about health care providers and may take action if regulatory requirements are not met. However it does not handle complaints or offer an arbitration service.

<https://www.cqc.org.uk>

Our approach in handling your complaint

We will aim to be open and honest with you and show you respect throughout the complaint process. We will do all we can to address your concerns in a fair manner and give you answers to your questions. We will listen to you and take your concerns seriously. As part of the investigation, we will access your clinical records, and any communication you have with your health care provider such as emails or text messages so we can investigate thoroughly the care you have received. We will aim to learn from the process so we can continue to improve the services we offer.

Raising concerns will not have a negative impact on any care that you receive from us. We value your feedback and see it as an opportunity to improve. In some circumstances, if the relationship between you and your midwife has completely broken down, we may offer you care from an alternative midwife if we can.

We acknowledge that during the complaints process, you may experience distress or anxiety. However, we ask that you also behave in a manner that is respectful to our staff. If your behaviour becomes unacceptable (for example you refuse to comply with the process, you withhold your clinical notes preventing investigation, you are abusive or offensive to staff or you refuse to accept the findings even when there is evidence to support them) a Director from Private Midwives will formally write to you with a code of expected behaviour. In extreme cases, legal action will be taken and you will be asked to make alternative arrangements for your care provision.

Notify us that you have a concern

We will acknowledge your email and respond to you within 3 working days. We will assign a senior person to investigate and tell you who this is and what the process will be.

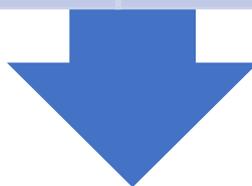
info@privatemidwives.com



Your complaint is now at STAGE ONE

Following investigation, we will respond to you in writing within 20 working days. Sometimes it takes a little longer to get copies on notes, texts etc but we will keep you informed. This stage will not take longer than 3 months

If you are not satisfied, you should notify us in writing within 6 months of receiving your response.



Your complaint is now at STAGE TWO

The Director of Midwifery will review your initial complaint, the investigation, the response to you and your remaining concerns. An objective review will be undertaken and if necessary further investigation completed. We will aim to give you a full written response within 20 working days. If there is any delay we will keep you updated. This stage will not last longer than 3 months.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have a right to escalate your concern to ISCAS for an independent, external adjudication. You should write to ISCAS within 6 months of receiving your stage 2 response.



Your complaint is now at STAGE THREE

ISCAS will review your complaint, the investigation and the responses to you. They will appoint an independent expert to review your case and notify you of the outcome. This process normally takes 3-6 months.

In some circumstances the ISCAS code does not apply.

In these circumstances, the following process will apply for STAGE THREE complaints:

Stage one and two are as above				
If you believe a health care provider has behaved unlawfully and committed a criminal act, you should notify the police and the regulatory body (Nursing and Midwifery Council for UK and Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)	If your complaint is concerning a financial dispute you should make a claim with the small claims court	If your complaint relates to your private medical insurance and their provision, you should escalate to the financial ombudsman	If your complaint relates to NHS/HSE care, you should address your complaint to the hospital concerned	If you are seeking compensation because you believe medical negligence has occurred, you should seek legal advice