FIPO Patient Advice – if you have concerns about your private medical care

The Federation of Independent Practitioner Organisations (FIPO) is committed to promoting high quality medical care in the private health sector. We represent Consultant doctors and specialists whose patients are treated in UK private hospitals and clinics, their care paid for by the patient directly (self-pay) or funded through the patient's private medical insurance policy.

The vast majority of patients are pleased and satisfied with the quality of care provided by the doctor and staff in a private (non-NHS) hospital or clinic. Occasionally, however, patients have concerns or queries about their treatment or the costs. Your concerns should be addressed promptly and fully, and miscommunications corrected.

For the benefit of patients, FIPO offers a guide to who you can contact if you have concerns or complaints about care you have received as a private patient:

If you have a concern or complaint about your doctor's care or their charges:

- Contact the doctor directly, or through their office/Medical Secretary, ask the doctor to discuss with you your concerns.
- If your concern relates to the cost of your doctor's fees, check to see if you have received a letter from the doctor's office prior to treatment, outlining the potential charges.
- If your concern or complaint relates to the quality of the medical treatment, you can also contact the hospital or clinic at which you were treated. The hospital will advise you on how to register your concerns and will explain how these will be investigated. All hospitals in the private sector are required to have medically led clinical governance programmes which are discussed at their regular Medical Advisory Committees
- If necessary, you or the hospital can refer your concerns to the **Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service** (**ISCAS**). You can learn more about the service ISCAS offers patients here: https://iscas.cedr.com/.

- If you believe that your treatment has caused you serious harm, that your Consultant has not dealt satisfactorily with your concerns, nor has investigation by the hospital and ISCAS addressed this fully, you have the right to refer your case to the **General Medical Council**, the independent regulator of doctors in the UK, see www.gmc-uk.org/concerns.

If you have a concern or a complaint about the quality or cost of the care provided by the hospital itself (rather than the individual consultant):

- Guidance on how to raise a concern or make a complaint will be available on the hospital's website or can be provided by the hospital staff. The Hospital Manager responsible for care quality will investigate your concerns and reply to you.

- If the investigation by the hospital has not resolved your concerns, you can refer your complaint about the hospital to the **Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service** (**ISCAS**). For information about the role of ISCAS, see https://iscas.cedr.com.

You may have a concern or complaint about your medical insurance company. This might relate, for instance, to the level of reimbursement or whether your insurance company allowed you to see the medical specialist of your choice.

- In the first instance, contact your Medical Insurance company to discuss your concerns. They should be able to resolve this satisfactorily for you.

- If your complaint relates to the level of reimbursement and you have not received a satisfactory response from your Insurer, you could raise the concerns you have about your insurance company and your insurance policy with the **Financial Ombudsman Service**. For more information, see: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/consumers/how-to-complain.

- If your complaint relates to the level of reimbursement provided by your Insurer or other matters such as inability to see the medical specialist of your choice, you could highlight your concerns to the **Consumers' Association**, see https://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights.

More information about FIPO at www.fipo.uk