



Life Stories Medical
501A High Street Northcote VIC 3070
Tel: 03 9828 7575
Fax: 03 9828 7576
Email: info@lsmedical.com.au

Patient Agreement

1. General Terms of Service

1.1 Overview Of Services

We at Life Stories Medical are committed to providing quality, patient centric primary medical care. These services include but are not limited to:

- a. Family Medicine
- b. Preventive care
- c. Chronic disease management
- d. Mental health
- e. Vaccinations
- f. Minor procedures

1.2 Engagement Of Services

General Length of Consultation

At Life Stories Medical, consultations are run by appointment only. This allows for more efficient workflow which translates into shorter waiting times. In general, standard appointments of **10 minutes** will be allocated. If a longer appointment is required, please kindly call reception to advise of your request. This will be triaged and suitable arrangements will be made if necessary. Please also be mindful of the time allocated. It would be helpful if you could itemize and prioritize your issues.

Please be mindful that running over the allocated time will impact on the next patient waiting. It is much appreciated if you are mindful of the time allocated. This will enable us to make everyone's day run smoother.

Long or Special Consults

If a special type of appointment is required, please inform reception in advance so that appropriate resources can be allocated for the task.

These include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Vaccinations for adults and children;
- b. Wound care;
- c. Minor procedures; or
- d. Complex paperwork that consists of more than 2 pages for the doctor to complete (ie. medical reports, Centrelink forms, etc)

Consults When You Are Overseas

If you are overseas, we will be unable to facilitate a consultation and we recommend making arrangements with a local doctor to assist with your matter. Upon returning to Australia, you may then wish to make a follow up appointment at our clinic.



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Workcover or TAC Claims

Please note as of 10 July 2023, we would not be accepting or managing any new Workcover or TAC related matters.

Precondition for Telehealth

Current Medicare requirements generally require 1 in person consult in the preceding 12 months to allow a Medicare rebate to be claimed for the telehealth consultation. Notwithstanding Medicare's requirements, we would preferably still like to see our patients in person at least once within a 12 month period to adequately maintain the therapeutic relationship. If Medicare requirements have been met, feel free to book a telehealth consult if you believe that your issues can be managed adequately without a face to face visit. If you are unsure that your needs can be met through telehealth, please enquire further with reception.

1.3 Wait Times

We value your time and aim for a wait time within 10-20 minutes. Generally, the law of averages applies whereby some patients would need more time and some less. Please be mindful of the next patient waiting.

1.4 Follow Up Of Results and Recalls

At Life Stories Medical, it is the patient's responsibility to follow up on results.

To obtain your test results, please kindly schedule a follow up appointment. Unless there are significant clinical abnormalities, we will await your re-engagement.

The estimated turnaround times for the various tests are as follows:

1. Pathology tests may take up to 1 week;
2. Imaging tests may take up to 1 week;
3. Cervical screening tests may take up to 2 weeks;
4. Skin procedure results may take up to 2 weeks; or
5. NIPT tests may take up to 2 weeks.

We recommend that you schedule your next appointment based on the estimated time, **from the date of your last test**, to ensure that all test results are received prior to your next appointment.

Urgent results that will alter the course of clinical care would be advised of as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The doctor may, at his/her absolute discretion, provide an unscheduled phone call to the patient to follow up on outstanding results. We recommend that patients take note of our clinic's telephone number and do not block it. If our number has been blocked by you, you indemnify and save harmless Life Stories Medical against any liability directly and/or indirectly incurred as a result of you blocking our number/s including any claim, action, liability, loss, damage or suit.



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1.5 Urgent Requests and Medical Emergencies

We understand that at times, there are urgent issues that you need us to address in a timely fashion. If there is an urgent request, please kindly phone reception. Walk-in attendances will be triaged and if deemed a medical emergency, will be attended to promptly or redirected to the Emergency Department. Non-emergencies will be allocated a suitable time for follow up.

Emails would be checked intermittently throughout the day during business hours, therefore request for service through email may not be attended to as timely as expected.

Please note that the best way for your issue to be addressed would be via an appointment with the doctor, no matter how trivial. Scheduling an appointment will allow for a dedicated time to be allocated for the task and allows your issue/s to be addressed as best as possible.

1.6 Cancellation Wait Lists

We do apologise if there is no availability for an appointment. If the matter is urgent we may be able to accommodate as described in item 1.5. We can place you on a cancellation list and allocate you an appointment when available. Please also advise reception regarding the nature of your appointment.

If a slot becomes available, reception will contact you via your preferred method of communication (usually mobile phone). These appointments are secured on a “first come, first served” basis, so it would be handy if you keep your phone close.

1.7 After Hours Issues

If the clinic is closed and there is an issue to be raised, you can contact reception by phone on the next day we are opened or send us an email. Emails are only attended to during business hours on an intermittent basis. If you have an urgent medical issue, please contact our after-hours deputizing service on 13 SICK (13 7425) or present to your closest Urgent Care Clinic or Emergency Department.

If you do seek medical attention after hours, kindly consider booking in a follow up appointment so that we can review the health episode for ongoing continuity of care.

1.8 Late and Non-Attendances

If you are running late, please let reception know as soon as reasonably possible to allow us to make alternative arrangements to best accommodate you. Please note that if you do not inform our office in a timely manner, we may not be able to make any immediate concessions upon your arrival.

If you are unable to make your appointment, we must let us know at least **1 hour** before your scheduled appointment time. Please note **penalties are applicable** for late cancellation (1 hour before time of appointment), late rescheduling (1 hour before original time of appointment) or non-attendances.



1.9 Provision of Drugs Of Dependence

Safe Prescribing

At Life Stories Medical, we ascribe to the policies of safe prescribing, especially in regards to the prescription of drugs of dependence. These include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Opiates;
- b. Benzodiazepines; and
- c. Stimulant medication.

This clinic **does not** participate in opiate replacement therapy (ie. methadone or suboxone).

Patients are reminded that we have a **zero tolerance** on issues relating to staff abuse.

Pre-requisite for the Provision of Drug of Dependence

Please note that it will take time to get accurate medical information about your condition. Until such information has been obtained and the doctor is satisfied with the level of medical information provided, your doctor may choose, at their absolute discretion, not to prescribe any medication. It is our policy that doctor/s do not prescribe drugs of dependence until they have a full clinical picture.

Cessation of the Prescription of Drug of Dependence

Your doctor may decide, at their absolute discretion, not to continue prescribing a drug of dependence previously prescribed for you. It is our policy that doctor/s do not prescribe drugs of dependence if they are of the opinion that previous and/or subsequent prescriptions are inappropriate.

Dosage

Your doctor will evaluate your condition and only prescribe medication of the strength necessary for you. This may be different than what another doctor may have given you in the past.

If the decision to prescribe is made after a shared discussion of goals, plans, risks and benefits, you may be required to confirm your consent in writing.

Provision of Undertaking and Acknowledgment By You

You may be asked to provide an undertaking that will detail our practice's expectations when prescribing drugs of dependence. This undertaking will include:

- a. your responsibilities as a patient when taking a drug of dependence;
- b. ensuring any prescription issues are fully disclosed and are true and accurate;
- c. sign an acknowledgment of advice with regards to taking your medication;
- d. abiding by the advice with regards to taking your medication;
- e. consent to the level of monitoring in which the doctor believes is reasonably sufficient, and the method, which is reasonably necessary, to execute such monitoring; and
- f. abiding by the standards of behaviour expected of you.

Patients may need to acknowledge that their care requirements may be complex and that referral for ongoing care for all or part of your healthcare may be required. It is our practice policy that patient care is matched with the level of complexity.



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Repeat Scripts

All requests for repeat scripts for drugs of dependence must go to your usual doctor. If your usual doctor is unavailable, the nominated covering doctor may provide temporary oversight.

Repeat prescriptions are generally written for a duration deemed appropriate for the patient's individual circumstances and should generally be filled at the same pharmacy.

All requests require a clinical review by your doctor. If it appears to your doctor that there is no improvement in your daily function or quality of life from the controlled substance, your medication may be discontinued.

Random Drug Testing

As a patient, you agree to and understand that your usual doctor reserves the right to perform random or unannounced drug testing. This is a safety issue.

Lost Prescriptions

Patients are responsible for their prescriptions. Lost prescriptions will not be replaced except under limited and exceptional circumstances

Follow up Appointments

It is the patient's responsibility to schedule a timely appointment for their next prescription for drugs of dependence. Where such appointment is not scheduled or you fail to attend or reschedule, the doctor may not be able to accommodate an urgent request for a script.

Patients have the responsibility to set appointments to review ongoing therapy. This generally should occur monthly.

Storage of Drug of Dependence

Patients have the responsibility for keeping medications in a safe and secure place, such as a locked cabinet or safe. If medications are lost, misplaced or stolen, your doctor may choose not to replace the medications or to taper and discontinue the medications.

Must Consume Drug of Dependence As Directed

Patients have the responsibility for taking medications as directed and understand that increasing the dose without the close supervision of your doctor could lead to cessation of prescribing. Early requests for repeat scripts will not be performed.

1.10 Acceptable Behaviour

At Life Stories Medical we would like to preserve a safe and cohesive environment for staff and patients. We have **zero tolerance** for any abusive, aggressive, discriminatory and anti-social behaviour.

These may involve but are not limited to:

- a. swearing at staff or other patients;



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- b. shouting, raising your voice or making offensive remarks;
- c. making verbal or physical threats;
- d. attending when intoxicated with alcohol and/or drugs;
- e. damaging or stealing property; or
- f. acting in a manner that is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress.

If a patient's behaviour is found to be unacceptable, the following measures may be instituted:

- a. You may be asked leave the practice;
- b. Police attendance may be requested by practice staff; or
- c. Future attendance at this practice may be discontinued and you will have to seek healthcare elsewhere.

1.11 Verification of Identity

The patient is required to present their original photo ID (Passport or Australian Driver's Licence) and their original Medicare card to reception prior to any appointment. Where the patient fails to provide either document, Life Stories Medical has the absolute discretion to refuse to provide any service on that day and you may be asked to reschedule the appointment.

2. Privacy Policy

2.1 Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

2.2 Why and When Your Consent Is Necessary

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our doctors and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek prior written consent from you to do this.

2.3 Why Do We Collect, Use, Hold and Share Your Personal Information?

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

2.4 What Personal Information Do We Collect?

The information we will collect about you include but not limited to:

- a. your name, date of birth, addresses, contact details;



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- b. medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors;
- c. Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes;
- d. healthcare identifiers; and
- e. health fund details.

2.5 Dealing With Us Anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorized by law to only deal with identified individuals. Please note that dealing with us anonymously or under a pseudonym may impact the extent of how healthcare is delivered.

2.6 How Do We Collect Your Personal Information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways, including but not limited to:

- a. when you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration;
- b. during the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information. These may include but are not limited to:
 - (i) Electronic transfer of prescriptions, other known as e-scripts;
 - (ii) My Health Record (via Shared Health Summaries or Event Summaries).
- c. when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media;
- d. other sources where it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from:
 - (i) your guardian or responsible person;
 - (ii) other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services; or
 - (iii) your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

2.7 When, Why And With Whom Do We Share Your Personal Information?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- a. with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy;
- b. with other healthcare providers;
- c. when it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas);
- d. when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent;
- e. to assist in locating a missing person;
- f. to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim;



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- g. for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process;
- h. when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification);
- i. during the course of providing medical services, for example through My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your prior written consent.

Personal health information may be shared with a nominated individual with your prior written consent.

We may provide de-identified or redacted data to other organizations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency where you are incapacitated and unable to provide consent, personal health information may be shared with one or more of the following parties to ensure your safety and the continuity of medical care:

- a. Next of kin if there is no appointment of a medical treatment decision maker;
- b. Your appointed medical treatment decision maker; or
- c. Relevant authorized health providers.

Provision of Information Outside Australia

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Marketing

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your prior written consent. If you provide your written consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

Improvement of Service

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

2.8 How Do We Store and Protect Your Personal Information?

Method of Storage

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. These may include but are not limited to:

- a. paper records;



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- b. electronic records;
- c. visual records (x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos); or
- d. audio recordings.

Our practice stores all personal information securely on both a cloud based protected information system and password encrypted local hardware. All staff in the practice have confidentiality agreements in place.

Period of Storage

We keep health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient records unless the patient is or was a child, in which case the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained 25 years of age.

2.9 How Can You Access and Correct Your Personal Information At Our Practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information. Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing, through email or a completed hardcopy form and our practice will respond within a reasonable time. This may take up to 30 days from the time the written request has been received.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to our practice email: info@lsmedical.com.au

Life Stories Medical can refuse to give you access to your health information in some situations, such as if:

- a. it may threaten your or someone else's life, health or safety;
- b. it may impact someone else's privacy; or
- c. giving access would be unlawful.

If the provision of certain information is potentially detrimental to others, our practice may provide a redacted version at our absolute discretion.

If the request for access to health information is refused, we will provide written notification and the rationale behind our refusal.

2.10 Fees Regarding Access And Transfer Of Personal Information

During Consultation

Personal information may be accessed, corrected and discussed during a consultation with a doctor. Fees would be charged in accordance to our consultation fee schedule.

Transfer of Medical Records Electronically to a Single Nominated Practice



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A general administrative fee of **\$25** (incl of GST and postage) will be raised for the transfer of a standard medical record via an electronic medium to a single nominated practice. This will be sent directly to 1 GP practice nominated by the patient in writing.

Redirection of Medical Records (Electronic)

If another practice is chosen, a re-direction fee of **\$10** (incl of GST) would be imposed.

Complex Medical Records (Electronic)

If the medical record is complex or extensive (more than 30 minutes required collating and preparing information for transfer) a fee of **\$35** (incl of GST and postage) will be charged.

Hard Copy Transfer

Hard copy transfer of medical records would incur a fee would of **\$27.50** (incl of GST). If the record exceeds 20 black/white A4 pages, a fee of **\$38.50** (incl of GST) would be charged. Postage and/or courier fees would be charged additionally and you will be advised once a quote has been received by the postage or courier service provider.

Variation of Fees and Charges

Please note that the above schedule of fees and charges are correct as at the date of signing this Patient Agreement. These are subject to any variation at the absolute discretion of Life Stories Medical Pty Ltd without prior notice. Please ensure that you are aware of the updated fees and charges prior to service provision.

2.11 How Can You Lodge A Privacy-Related Complaint, and How Will The Complaint Be Handled At Our Practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Our contact details are as follows:

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We will respond to you within 30 days upon receipt of your privacy-related complaint. You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give us time to respond before they will initiate investigations. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

2.12 Privacy And Our Website

Life Stories Medical's website and social media pages contain links to other websites on the internet. The internet is inherently insecure and links to these sites are beyond our control. The



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conduct of third party websites or companies linked to our website is governed by their corresponding privacy policies.

We would recommend that you take time to consider the privacy policy and terms and conditions of any linked external website or social media platform.

We cannot guarantee that any information you communicate to us online will not be intercepted while being transmitted over the internet. Any information, (personal or otherwise) which you transmit to us online is transmitted at your own risk.

We, or our third-party service providers, may use cookies, web beacons (clear GIFs, web bugs) and similar technologies to track site visitor activity and collect site data. We may combine this data with the personal Information we have collected as a result of our routine operations. Examples of information that we may collect include technical information such as your computer's IP address and your browser type, and information about your visit such as the products you viewed or searched for, the country you are in, what you clicked on and what links you visited to get to or from our website. If we identify you with this information, any use or disclosure of that information will be in accordance with this Privacy Policy.

3. Fees

Life Stories Medical is a private billing practice.

Our fee schedule are as follows:

Item	Out of pocket cost after Medicare rebate
Standard consultation gap (Face to face and telehealth)	\$45
Concession consultation gap (Face to face and telehealth)	\$35
Weekend surcharge in addition to consultation gap	\$10
Minor procedure gap Eg. Cryotherapy, Ear Toilet and Ear Curette	\$25
Major procedure gap Eg. Suturing, plastering, invasive skin procedures	\$55
Iron infusion	\$135

Consultation gaps will apply across all consult types, unless stated otherwise. In general, these include but are not limited to the following:

- Level A/B/C/D consultation items (face to face and telehealth)
- Mental health consults

Payments are accepted via electronic funds transfer only.



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Payments for services are to be made in full immediately after the consultation or before 2:30pm on the day of the consultation, whichever is the later.

If you are entitled to a rebate, the process would be as follows: (Eg. For a standard Level B consultation)

Step 1: Full payment of \$88.90 is made (gap + rebate)

Step 2: Rebate processed through Medicare/Insurer.

Step 3: \$43.90 is credited back to your bank account.

Table of Medicare rebate rates for some commonly used item numbers (Please note that the figures may not be updated to reflect the most recent amounts)

Item	Rebate
Standard consult (23)	\$43.90
Long consult (36)	\$84.90
Standard mental health consult (2713)	\$83.65

Further explanation in relation to rebates can be found below:

3.1 For Medicare Card Holders

We would be using the Medicare Webclaim system to facilitate your rebate claim. Please note that the **total amount** of the consultation (rebate + co-payment) would have to be **paid first** via electronic funds transfer. The **rebate** will then be processed by Medicare **after and credited back into the bank account on file with Medicare**. Medicare has quoted a rebate turnaround time of up to 2 business days, but this may take longer depending on some circumstances.

Please kindly ensure that your personal and account details are up to date with Medicare. If your details are not up to date with Medicare, we may not be able to process your rebate on your behalf and you would have to lodge the claim yourself. We would provide a copy of your invoice for you to submit to Medicare.

3.2 For non-Medicare card holders

The **total amount** of the consultation (rebate + co-payment) would have to **paid first**, upon conclusion of the consult. An invoice will be provided to you to facilitate your claim from your insurer, if applicable.

3.3 Workcover claims (for existing cases)

The **total amount** of the consultation (rebate + co-payment) would have to **paid first**, upon conclusion of the consult. An invoice will be provided to you to facilitate your claim from Workcover, if applicable.

3.4 TAC claims (for existing cases)



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The **total amount** of the consultation (rebate + co-payment) would have to **paid first**, upon conclusion of the consult. An invoice will be provided to you to facilitate your claim from TAC, if applicable.

Consultations that do not attract a gap will be billed directly to TAC.

If we are not able to bill TAC directly, the total amount of the consult would have to be paid first upon conclusion of the consultation. An invoice will be provided to you to facilitate your claim from TAC, if applicable.

3.5 Other Billable Entities

Please note that there are some services that may attract additional fees as they may not be covered by Medicare/insurance. These include but are not limited to medical reports, medical examinations and certain administrative tasks.

Consumables and vaccines used in the process of providing medical care may be charged accordingly with the patient's financial consent.

Transfer of medical records, part or whole, may incur a fee. This will depend on volume of information sent and medium of transfer. More detail may be found in item 2.10 of this document

3.6 Failure to Attend, Late Rescheduling or Late Cancellation Charges

Unfortunately, non-attendances and late changes come at cost to the practice, our practitioners and patients who would have otherwise benefitted from an available time slot.

A charge will be raised in the event of the following circumstances:

- Failure to attend a booked consultation
- Late cancellation or rescheduling within 1 hour of a booked consultation.

The charge will be **\$97.79** for each time slot where the penalty is applicable (the total cost of a standard consult incl GST).

Unless all outstanding fees have been paid in full, no further bookings will be permitted.

3.7 Failure to make payment post consult.

If full payment for any amount is not made by 4pm on the date they are incurred, you will be:

- a) bulk billed for the consult;
- b) charged an account reconciliation fee; and
- c) barred from making any further appointments at our clinic until all debts incurred are cleared.

3.8 Financial Consent



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Please note that by receiving services from Life Stories Medical, you provide consent to us raising an appropriate charge. This will be determined based on a combination of factors, including but not limited to the duration, complexity, content and resources required of the service.

Charges raised for services rendered would be guided by the assigned fee structure of the corresponding Health Purchaser, if applicable (ie. Medicare/Workcover/TAC/Private healthcare insurer).

If no co-payment is required and a Health Purchaser is billed directly on your behalf, an appropriate charge will be raised in accordance to the service rendered.

If a co-payment is required, we will endeavour to obtain explicit financial consent in regards to the out of pocket costs, prior to provision of services.

3.9 Variation of Fees and Charges

Please note that the above schedule of fees and charges are correct as at the date of signing this Patient Agreement. These are subject to any variation at the absolute discretion of Life Stories Medical Pty Ltd without prior notice. Please ensure that you are aware of the updated fees and charges prior to service provision.

4. Feedback

At Life Stories Medical, we are committed not only to making things right but making things better. If there are any comments, complaints or perhaps even the odd compliment, please let us know over the phone or drop us an email.

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