

Happy House Surgery - Practice Complaints Procedure

The practice follows the NHS and Social Care Complaints procedure which applies to NHS bodies which includes NHS trusts, SHA's, PCT's and all providers of NHS healthcare including the work done by independent healthcare providers for the NHS.

How to complain

We hope that most complaints can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If the problem cannot be sorted out this way and the patient wishes to make a complaint you wish to make a complaint, the complaint manager should know as soon as possible - ideally, within a matter of days or, at most, a few weeks - because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. We should however have the details of a complaint:

- within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

The practice will investigate complaints made outside of this time frame if there is good reason for it not being reported earlier and where it is still possible to investigate the complaint fairly and effectively.

Complaints can be made either to the practice directly or to the PCT.

The practice will not allow a patient complaint to adversely affect the care or treatment provided or arranged by the practice.

The patient should be given a leaflet which explains the complaints policy at the outset.

Who can make a complaint?

Complainants should normally be current or former patients. The patient can give **written permission**, if they wish, for someone to act on their behalf, such as a relative, solicitor or MP. Patients over the age of 16 should make the complaint themselves, unless mentally impaired. Patients under 16 can also make a complaint if deemed able to do so.

Complaining to the Practice:

Written complaints should be addressed to the complaints manager Mr S. Harder, Practice Manager. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager to discuss your concerns or, alternatively, one of the partners.

The practice can, if it feels it is appropriate, refer the complaint to another NHS organisations complaints procedure if it feels it is the most appropriate body to deal with the complaint.

Complaints to the PCT

We hope that patients will have the confidence to use our practice complaints procedure. The procedures are open and honest: the practice must also produce an annual report for the NHS which outlines the number and nature of the complaints made along with information on the resolution of the issues.

This, however, does not affect the patient's right to approach the TPCT or PALS, if they feel they cannot raise the complaint with us. The TPCT may choose to refer the complaint to the practice complaints procedure where it deems appropriate.

Written complaints should be addressed to the complaints manager and sent to the following address:

Sunderland CCG,
Pemberton House, Colima Avenue,
Sunderland Enterprise Park,
Sunderland,.
SR5 3XB.

The NHS Customer Contact Centre (formally PALS) can also assist with a complaint – they can be contacted on 0300 311 2233.

Complaints made by the Practice Complaints Procedure: what we shall do

We shall acknowledge your complaint either orally or by written letter within three working days for receipt of the complaint.

The practice will investigate the complaint in a manner appropriate to resolve it speedily and efficiently; and during the investigation, keep the complainant informed, as far as reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation.

Whilst the scheme allows NHS bodies up to six months to investigate complaints (and longer if justified) it is the aim of the practice to have looked into your complaint by ten working days of the date you raised it with us. It is anticipated that, in the majority of instances, we should then be in a position to offer an explanation.

When we look into a complaint, we shall aim to:

- keep the complainant reasonably informed of the progress of a complaint if it is anticipated that the complaint will exceed the 10 working days mark
- find out what happened and what went wrong
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.

If a complainant is unhappy with the initial stage of the process

It is hoped that complaints are resolved quickly and efficiently through this process but, where this is not the case, the complaint can then be referred to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. This route is also open to GP Practices who are dissatisfied by a response by the TPCT.

Complaints excluded from the procedure include:

- Complaints first made orally and were resolved by the practice to the complainant's satisfaction within one working day.
- Complaints about the same subject matter as a complaint that has been previously resolved.
- Complaints about care solely provided by the Independent Healthcare Sector, which has its own procedures.
- Complaints made by one NHS body against another.
- Complaints alleging failure by a public body to comply with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Complaints made by employees in relation to their work for the NHS

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