

University Health Centre at Queen's Complaints Procedure

Introduction

If you have a complaint or concern about any aspect of the Health Centre or any of the staff working in this Practice, please let us know. We operate a Practice complaints procedure as part of the Department of Health 'Guidance in relation to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure (April 2023); the HSC Complaints Procedure. Our system meets the national criteria. ??

Under the HSC Complaints Procedure, a complaint is "an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response."

The Practice complaints procedure is available from reception, outlined in the Practice handbook and is displayed on the patient notice board within the Practice in the waiting area.

How to complain

Complaints can be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know *as soon as possible*, ideally on the day. This is because the sooner we know about a problem, the easier it will be for us to establish what happened. In any event, please let us have details of your complaint:

- Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager, Mrs Catherine Rouse. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with Mrs Rouse to discuss your concerns. She will explain the Complaints Procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

- ❖ Complaints of a clinical nature will be investigated by a GP Partner.

Where a complaint is against a person named in the implementation of this procedure the Partners will appoint a nominee to investigate the complaint.

What we will do

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within ten working days of the date when you raised it with us. Where this is not possible we will aim to keep you updated on the timeframes involved. When we look into your complaint, we shall:

- ✓ Find out what happened and what went wrong.
- ✓ Hear all sides of the incident

- ✓ Give you the opportunity to discuss your complaint.
- ✓ Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate.
- ✓ Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again. This may include:
 1. Changing policy or procedure.
 2. Providing more information for patients and staff.
 3. Provide more training for staff.
 4. Educating patients on policy NHS policy, roles and responsibilities.

Complaints are logged and recorded by the Practice Manager. Complaints are kept securely by the Practice Manager and are stored separately from patient records. An anonymised copy of all complaints and the Practices responses are forwarded to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of the handling of your complaint you may refer the matter to the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have his or her permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed to authorize you to complain on their behalf.

Complaining to the SPPG Complaints Team

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our Practice complaints procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our Practice. But this does not affect your right to approach the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us. The SPPG Complaints Team can act as an 'honest broker' or intermediary between you and the Practice to help resolve your complaint. The SPPG Complaints Team can be contacted at: - SPPG Complaints Team, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS; complaints.sppg@hscni.net or telephone (028) 9536 3893.

Patient and Client Council

The Patient Client Council (PCC) is an independent body that can assist you with your complaint and provide advice and support throughout the complaints process. They cannot investigate complaints, but can act as an advocate for you, provide assistance to you in drafting letters of complaint, and accompany you to meetings. Their address is 5th Floor, 1416 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BA. Their email is info.pcc@pcc-ni.net or Freephone 0800 917 0222.

NI Public Services Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you can approach the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

However, you must do so within six months of having received our final response.

NI Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House

JUNE 2023 CR

33 Wellington Place
BELFAST
BT1 6HN

Tel: Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Further information is available at www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk/