

## Making a Complaint – Information for Patients

### Making a Complaint

If you have any complaints or concerns about the service that you have received from the doctors or staff working for the practice, please let us know.

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 within a matter of days or at most a few weeks – because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

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

The timescale for acceptance of a complaint may be extended depending on the individual circumstances, at the discretion of the practice.

Dr Schulz has overall clinical responsibility for complaints about our service. The Practice Manager, Neil Sommerville, has responsibility for investigating and responding to complaints. He will explain the procedure to you and make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. You can make your complaint:

- In writing – some complaints may be easier to explain in writing – please give as much information as you can, then send your complaint to the practice for the attention of Neil Sommerville, Practice Manager.
- In person or by telephone to Neil Sommerville, Practice Manager. It may be necessary to organise a mutually convenient appointment time for this.

### What we will do

Our complaints procedure is designed to make sure that we resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

We will attempt to resolve your complaint within 5 working days – this is known as ‘early resolution’ and is appropriate where an apology, explanation or other action can help to resolve the complaint quickly.

For more complex issues where a more detailed investigation is required, a response will be provided within 20 working days.

If, in exceptional circumstances, we are unable to provide a response within 20 working days we will notify you with an explanation of why this is the case. We will also provide details of when you can expect our response.

When we look into your complaint, we will:

- Find out what happened and what went wrong
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this
- Make sure you receive an apology, where appropriate

- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

At the end of the investigation our response will be provided either verbally or in writing, depending on your preference.

### **What we won't do**

Our approach to complaints handling is designed to comply with the national NHS complaints handling procedures. In line with these we are not able to respond to complaints in certain scenarios, including:

- complaints about secondary care services – these should be directed to the Complaints Team at NHS Lanarkshire.
- complaints which are subject to legal proceedings, or are so likely to be that it would not be appropriate to investigate the complaint under this procedure.
- a complaint against a person where the practice is taking, or proposing to take, disciplinary action.
- a complaint, the subject matter of which has previously been investigated and responded to.
- complaints that are aggressive, threatening or intimidating.
- vexatious complaints or repeated complaints where the subject matter has previously been investigated and responded to.

### **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 unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

### **Getting help to make a complaint**

The Patient Rights Act provided for the establishment of the Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS). PASS operates independently of the NHS and provides free, confidential information, advice and support to anyone who uses the NHS in Scotland. The service promotes an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients and can advise and support people who wish to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make complaints about treatment and care provided. Further information can be found on the PASS web site:

[www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk](http://www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk)

### **What you can do next**

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe that this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and the opportunity to improve our practice.

If you remain dissatisfied with the responses to your complaint, you have the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services

Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. This includes complaints about the NHS in Scotland. If you remain dissatisfied with the practice after our complaints process has concluded, you can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint. The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- where you have not gone through our complaints handling procedure
- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about, or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO  
FREEPOST SPSO  
Bridgeside House  
99 McDonald Road  
Edinburgh  
EH7 4NS

Web: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

### **How we use complaints to improve our practice**

To support learning and improvement, complaints received by the practice will be shared within the practice team where appropriate.

A review of complaints is carried out annually to identify any trends or additional learning points.

### **Further information**

Further information about making a complaint is available from the NHS Inform Website: [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)