

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 a NHS wide system for dealing with complaints. Our system meets the national criteria.

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:

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, providing 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 doesn't 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. The practice also undertakes an annual return of anonymised complaints to the HSCB Board. An anonymised

copy of all complaints and the practices responses are forwarded to the Health and Social Care Board Complaints department.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of the handling of your complaint you may refer the matter to the 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 Health and Social Care Board and the Ombudsman

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.

If for any reason you feel that the practice complaints procedure has not resolved your problem, then you have the right to approach the Health and Social Care Board directly, should you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

The HSC Board will act as an “honest broker” where requested to try to restore trust between a patient and the practice. You can contact the Health and Social Services Board at, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS or on 0300 555 1115 and request to be through to this department.

The Patient Client Council (PCC) can assist you with your complaint and provide advice and support throughout the process. Their address is 1st Floor Ormeau Baths, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS. Their email is info.pcc@hscni.net or Freephone 0800 917 0222

If you are still not satisfied with how we have handled your complaint then you may ask the NI Commissioner for Complaints (the Ombudsman) to investigate your complaint.

You should contact the Ombudsman no later than six months after the event they are complaining about.

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

The Ombudsman
Freepost BEL 1478
Belfast
BT1 6BR