

INTRODUCTION...

The people who look after your health will do whatever they can to provide you with a quality service but where we fail to meet your expectations our aim will be to give you a quick but thorough response which answers your concerns. This leaflet tells you what to do if you want to complain.

If you have a complaint or are concerned about treatment you have received from the Doctors or any of the staff working in this Practice, please let us know. We operate a Practice-based complaints procedure which is in accordance with Complaints in the HSC: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning (April 2009).

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, let us know as soon as possible – ideally, within a matter of days – this will help us to find out what happened more easily. You may complain:

- ⇒ in writing, addressing your complaint to Mrs. R Hughes, Practice Manager
- ⇒ by telephone on 028867 62995
- ⇒ by email to Practicemanager.Z00401@gp.hscni.net
- ⇒ in person

All options of making a complaint are treated equally and in confidence.

Although you should make your complaint as soon as possible after the event we can consider complaints made within six months of the date of discovering the problem provided this is within twelve months of the incident. If it is clearly unreasonable in the circumstances to make a complaint earlier and where it is possible to investigate the facts of the case, we can consider extending this time limit.

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager, Mrs R Hughes. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager in order to discuss your concerns. She will explain the Complaints Procedure to you and will ensure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will greatly assist us if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

WHAT SHALL WE DO...

We shall acknowledge your complaint, normally 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.

Occasionally, if we have to make a lot of enquires it might take a little longer, but we will keep you informed. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with those involved.

In investigating your complaint, we shall aim to:

- ✓ Find out what happened and what went wrong;
- ✓ Enable you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this;
- ✓ Ensure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- ✓ Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.

The Patient and Client Council (PCC) are available to assist complainants and to provide advice and support through the HSC Complaints Procedure. The Patient and Client Council has local offices in Ballymena, Craigavon and Omagh with its Headquarters in Belfast (please see overleaf for contact details).

Anonymised copies of all written complaints received and responded to directly at Practice level will be forwarded to The Health and Social Care Board at their request for monitoring purposes. Should you not wish this to happen you must inform the Practice.

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 their written permission. A note signed by the person concerned and witnessed by the patient will be needed. If this is not possible the complaint should be brought by the next of kin.

COMPLAINING TO THE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE BOARD...

We hope that if you have a problem you will make use of our Practice Complaint Procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and allows an opportunity to improve our Practice. This does not affect your right to approach the Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG) if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the results of our investigation. The Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG) can act as an intermediary between Practitioners and Service Users in relation to complaints to assist in resolution. This will involve the facilitation of communication between parties, the provision of advice and/or obtaining explanations and responses to questions. Details are on the back page of this booklet.

WHAT IF YOU ARE STILL NOT HAPPY?...

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation of your complaint, (Local Resolution) please contact us again and we will do our best to resolve your concerns. Alternatively, you can approach the SPPG who can act as an 'Honest Broker' or intermediary between two parties to assist in the resolution of complaints.

Under the Health & Social Care Complaints Procedure, once local resolution has been exhausted, and if you remain dissatisfied with the Practice's investigation and response, you may ask the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) to consider your complaint.

THE N.I. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN...

The N.I. Public Services Ombudsman expects you to have raised your complaint initially with the Practice - this is known as "Local Resolution". If you are still dissatisfied once your complaint has been responded to by the Practice you are entitled to ask the N.I. Public Services Ombudsman to investigate your case.

You can contact the Ombudsman by writing to:

The N.I. Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)
Progressive House
Freepost NIPSO
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Text Phone: 90897789
Freephone: 0800 343424
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

You should contact the Ombudsman no later than **six** months after the event you are complaining about. However, the NIPSO may investigate a complaint outside this time limit if there are special circumstances that would make it proper to do so.

STAFF PROTECTION...

This Practice considers aggressive behaviour to be any personal, abusive or threatening comments bad language, physical contact and aggressive gestures. In keeping with the rest of the National Health Service we operate a "Zero Tolerance Policy" with respect to the protection of staff. This means that no abuse of Doctors or staff is acceptable whether verbal or physical and any patient behaving in this manner will be removed from the Practice List. In some cases the police will be informed.

Within the Complaints Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning (April 2009/Annexe 14: Unreasonable, Vexatious or Abusive Complaints), there will be times when there is nothing further that the Practice can reasonably do and where further communications would place inappropriate demands on Practice staff and resources. As a last resort the Practice will manage this type of complaint under the above policy.

DALRIADA URGENT CARE SERVICE...

In the event of you wishing to make a complaint against the Out of Hours Dalriada Urgent Care Service, your complaint should be forwarded in writing directly to:

Dalriada Urgent Care Service
20 Larne Road Link
Ballymena
BT42 3GA

Telephone: 028 2566 3500
Email: info@dalriadacare.org

We want to know when things go wrong, so we can quickly put them right for you and can learn from your experience to improve our services to other people. We also want to know what you think of our services generally, what your suggestions are for the future and when you are pleased by the efforts of our staff to help. Feel free to contact us with any comments or suggestions you may have.

If you feel that you cannot raise your complaint with us, or are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation, you should contact:

The Complaints Manager
Health and Social Care Board
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS

Tel: 028 95 363893 / 028 95 363266
Email: complaints.hscb@hscni.net

You may also like to contact The Patient and Client Council for help. The Council is an independent body set up to represent your interest in Health and Social Care. It is willing to assist you at any stage of your complaint by providing advice and support.

Their address contact details are as follows:

The Patient and Client Council
Freephone: 0800 917 0222
Email: info.pcc@hscni.net

**MID ULSTER HEALTH CARE
52 ORRITOR ROAD
COOKSTOWN
CO. TYRONE
BT80 8BN**

YOUR GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

Dr T.C Johnston

Dr C. Wasson

Dr M. Grant

Telephone: 028 867 62995

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