

Where your complaint has been sent initially to an incorrect organisation, we may seek your consent to forward this to the correct person to deal with.

Complaints and Legal action

It is important to note that the HSC MCHP cannot address questions of negligence or provide compensation. If a complainant's initial communication is through a solicitor's letter, it should not be inferred that the complainant has decided to take formal legal action. However, if the complainant has instigated formal legal action, or advised that he or she intends to do so, the complaints process should cease. The complainant should be notified of this in writing.

The person who deals with complaints is:

Mr Chris Steele
Practice Manager

Further Support

You may choose to complain directly to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) who may, with the consent of all parties concerned, take on the role of 'honest broker' during the complaints process.

Strategic Planning and Performance

Complaints Department
12 - 22 Linenhall Street
BELFAST BT2 8BS
Tel: 028 95363893
Email: complaints.SPPG@hscni.net

Patient & Client Council

Freephone 08009170222
Email: info.pcc@hscni.net

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

You have the right to approach NIPSO should you remain unhappy following the Practice's attempts to resolve your complaint within 6 months of receiving the Practice final response.

Freepost: Freepost NIPSO

or The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
BELFAST BT1 6HN
Telephone: 028 9023 3821
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Willowfield Surgery

Complaints Procedure

50-52 Castlereagh Road

Belfast

BT5 5FP

Tel: 02890 457862

complaints.z00032@gp.hscni.net

**Based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure for
Health and Social Care Sector**

What is a complaint?

The HSC MCHP describes a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action or about the standard of service provided or on behalf of an organisation.

Making a Complaint

Whilst we would try to resolve patient concerns quickly and easily as they arise, with the person(s) involved, we understand that may not always be appropriate for the patient and practice.

You can make your complaint in the way that best suits you. This can be face to face, on the telephone, in a letter or by email – complaints.z00032@gp.hscni.net
If you make your complaint in person - confidentiality and privacy will be ensured.

A written complaint will be directed to the Practice Manager. If the complaint is received verbally this will be recorded and passed onto the Practice Manager.

Your complaint should be made as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. In any event, this should be:

- Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem

You can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority. See the separate section in this leaflet.

We are able to provide you with a separate complaints form to register your complaint and this includes a third-party authority form to enable a complaint to be made by

someone else. Please ask at reception for this. You can provide this in your own format providing this covers all the necessary aspects.

What we do next

We look to settle complaints as soon as possible.

Stage 1 Complaint- Frontline response: The time allowed for this stage is 5 working days - although in practice many complaints will be resolved in less time. The date of receipt is normally considered to be the day a complaint is received, an extension of an additional 5 working days at Stage 1 is possible; but will only be in exceptional circumstances and the patient will be advised of any delays.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the complaint on completion of Stage 1, you have 30 working days to decide whether to have the complaint escalated.

Stage 2 Complaint - We will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days, and aim to investigate and respond to you within 20 working days. You will then receive a formal reply in writing, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is likely to take longer than this we will let you know, and keep you informed as the investigation progresses.

When investigating a complaint, we attempt to:

- Investigate what happened and why, which may include reviewing medical records and discussions with relevant practice staff.
- When the investigations are complete your complaint will be determined and a final response sent to you.
- Where appropriate, arrangements can be made for you to discuss the issue with those involved, if you would wish to do so.

- Review if there is any practice learnings from the complaint that can be implemented to provide better care/services for our patients.

The final response letter will include details of the result of your complaint, next steps if appropriate, and including your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied.

Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else

We keep to the strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved, we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that we can deal with someone else about it.

Please ask at reception for the Complaints Form which contains a suitable authority for the patient to sign to enable the complaint to proceed.

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply.

We may still need to correspond directly with the patient, or may be able to deal directly with the third party, and this depends on the wording of the authority provided.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation (e.g. social services) we may require to liaise with that organisation(s) so that you receive one coordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. (Continues overleaf)