

# Complaints Procedure

*Updated: 01/02/2023*

## Concerns & Feedback

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily with the person concerned, often at the time they arise, and this may be the approach you want to try first. If you have a **concern** or **feedback** for the Practice that we can resolve for you informally and quickly, then we may not need to use the formal complaint procedure to resolve the matter for you. You can raise a concern or give feedback using any of the same methods as a formal complaint and which are listed below. If we are unable to resolve the matter for you within **24hrs** working hours, we will automatically escalate your concern or feedback to a **formal complaint** and follow our procedure as outlined below.

## Making a Formal Complaint

If you wish to make a **formal complaint** about any aspect of your care, this should be done as soon as possible after the event and giving as much detail as possible to assist with our investigation. In normal circumstances for a complaint to be considered formal, we would need to receive it either;

- within 12 months of the incident, or
- within 12 months of you becoming aware of the incident

Under the NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 you have a choice whether to make your complaint either directly to the **Practice** (the service provider) **or** to **NHS England** (The Service Commissioner); it is not possible to make complaints about the same issue to both organisations. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint from either the Practice or NHSE, your next step would be to contact the **Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman**. Contact details for both them and NHSE are at the end of this document.

Should you need any help or advice in putting your complaint together or on any health issue, you can contact **Healthwatch Liverpool**:

**phone:** 0300 777 7007

**web:** [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk)

**address:** 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, LCVS Building, 151 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2AH

If you choose to complain directly to the Practice you can do this, for the attention of the **Complaints Manager**, in one of the following ways;

**email:** [complaints.seftonpark@nhs.net](mailto:complaints.seftonpark@nhs.net)

**phone:** 0151 295 8700 – request a call back from the Complaints Manager

**post:** FAO: Complaints Manager, Sefton Park Medical Centre,  
Smithdown Road, Liverpool, L15 2LQ

If you prefer to complain in writing we can provide you with a complaint form which we can either give to you at the Practice, send out in the post, or you can print one out from our website...

[www.seftonparkmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/media/nhbifknp/patient-complaint-form.pdf](http://www.seftonparkmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/media/nhbifknp/patient-complaint-form.pdf)

If you are a registered patient, you can complain about your own care. To complain on behalf of someone else we need their consent to do this, either in writing or verbally. We will not accept complaints made on behalf of others if that person does not wish to complain, and if they have the capacity to make that decision. Please see below for more information on how to make a complaint on behalf of someone else.

If you would prefer for our **Commissioner (Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board)** to investigate and respond to your complaint instead, you can contact them in one of the following ways:

**phone:** 0800 132 996

**email:** [enquiries@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

**address:** Patient Experience Team,  
No 1 Lakeside, 920 Centre Park Square,  
Warrington, WA11QY

You cannot make the same complaint to both the Commissioner and the Practice, either concurrently or successively; only one or the other.

## **Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else**

There are strict rules regarding the confidentiality of all patients' records and so if you wish to make a complaint on behalf of someone else, we will need both confirmation that they wish to make a complaint and written or verbal consent for a specific person to handle it on their behalf.

Our standard complaint form includes a third-party consent section to enable a complaint to be made on someone else's behalf.

Alternatively, we can take verbal consent from the patient over the phone, or in person, as part of the initial complaint process.

Where a patient is incapable of providing this consent due to illness, accident, or mental capacity it may still be possible for us to deal with the complaint. Please provide details of the circumstances that prevent them from giving this consent.

If you are complaining regarding the care of a deceased patient, then we may agree to respond to a family member or anyone acting on their behalf or who has had an interest in the welfare of the patient.

## **What we do next**

The Practice Manager is our Complaints Manager and is responsible for the investigation of and response to complaints. In the absence of the Complaints Manager a suitably trained deputy will act on their behalf. In some circumstance this may result in a delay in process however all formal complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

The acknowledgement will include information regarding the process, next steps and anticipated timescale for the investigation and response. It will also state who you can discuss the complaint with while it is ongoing.

We aim to settle complaints as soon as possible and this is normally achievable with 1 month of receiving them. More complex complaints may take longer, and this would be communicated in the acknowledgement.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation e.g. social services or a hospital department, we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one coordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. 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.

It is possible more information may be required to complete our investigation; we will contact you if this is the case. At any point you can contact us to discuss the complaint as per the contact information in the acknowledgment.

When the investigation is complete, a final written response will be sent to you. The final response letter will include, but is not limited to;

- details of how the investigation was conducted
- who was involved in the investigation (if applicable)
- whether or not we uphold the complaint (some complaints may be partially upheld)
- an apology if we are at fault
- details on what we intend to change as a result of the investigation (if applicable)
- details on what to do if you are dissatisfied with the response

The final response will be signed off by a senior responsible person at the practice, this would normally be one of the GP Partners or the Practice Manager. In some cases, if the complaint involves the responsible persons, it may be necessary to have the response signed off by a third party (such as GP working at another practice or the Local Medical Committee).

All complaints are discussed with the team members involved and the GP Partners are always involved at some stage. Performance management of individuals may be an outcome if our investigation indicates that a Practice Policy was not followed. We discuss complaints both at weekly clinical meetings and monthly full team meetings to share the learnings and reduce the risk of any repeated errors. Complaints would normally be anonymised for the purposes of these discussions unless this would have a negative impact on the learning.

All complaints are recorded anonymously for a period of 10 years for internal review and reporting.

Persistent and/or unreasonable complaints will be handled according to our policy on such types of contact.

Your future care will never be negatively impacted because you have made a complaint.

## **If you are dissatisfied with the outcome**

Whilst we will always make every effort to resolve your complaint fairly, swiftly, and accurately, you may find that the outcome is not to your satisfaction.

If you have additional queries or wish to challenge the response, we will continue to do our best to resolve this for you. We may invite you to a Local Resolution Meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the matter in person.

If you prefer you also have the right to approach the **Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman**. Their contact details are:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
30 Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

0345 0154033

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

[www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint)