

Old School Surgery
Complaints Information Sheet

If you have a complaint or are concerned about the services or treatment you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in our practice, please let us know. We operate a complaints procedure to deal with any complaints which meets the criteria agreed for Health & Social Care Services.

Who can complain?

Any person can complain about any matter connected with the provision of services provided by the Practice. Complaints may be made by:

- a patient or client;
- former patients, clients or visitors using HSC services and facilities;
- someone acting on behalf of existing or former patients or clients, providing they have obtained the patient's or client's consent;
- parents (or persons with parental responsibility) on behalf of a child; and
- any appropriate person in respect of a patient or client who has died e.g. the next of kin.

Consent

All our staff are aware of their legal and ethical duty to protect the confidentiality of patients. These legal requirements are set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Complaints by a third party should be made with the written consent of the individual concerned.

There will be situations where it is not possible to obtain consent, such as:

- where the individual is a child and not of sufficient age or understanding to make a complaint on their own behalf
- where the individual is incapable (for example, rendered unconscious due to an accident; judgement impaired by learning disability, mental illness, brain injury or serious communication problems)
- where the subject of the complaint is deceased

How can you complain?

Hopefully most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often when they arise and with the person concerned. If this is not possible, and you wish to formally make a complaint, let us know as soon as possible in order that we may find out what happened more easily.

We will, 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 reasonable in the circumstances to make a complaint after this and where it is still possible to investigate the facts of the case, we will consider extending this time limit.

If you wish to make a complaint, speak or write to the Practice Manager (Linda Taggart) on 02890864455. The complaints procedure will be explained to you and you will be given assurance that your concerns are dealt with promptly in an independent and unbiased manner. It will be helpful if you are as specific as possible about your complaint. Please be aware that anonymised copies of all written complaints are shared with the HSCB for monitoring purposes.

Health and Social Care Board – Honest Broker

We hope that, if you have a concern, that 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. However, if you feel unable to raise your complaint directly with us or are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation you can contact the Health and Social Care Board at the address below. The Board can act as an intermediary and help in the resolution of your complaint. One of the HSC Board's Officers will be happy to discuss the options available to you under the HSC Complaints Procedure and contacted as outlined below:

Complaints Office
Health and Social Care Board
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS
Tel: 02895363893
Email: complaints.hscb@hscni.net
Website: www.hscboard.hscni.net

Patient Client Council - Advocacy

Patient and Client Council can provide free and confidential advice, information and help you to make a complaint. This might include help with writing letters, making telephone calls and supporting you at any meetings they might need to attend. More information on the services provided by the patient and client council is available from the Council directly. Contact details are below:

Patient Client Council
2nd Floor, Central House
79 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 4JE

Tel: 0800 917 0222
Web: <http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net>

What Happens Next?

We shall record your written complaint and acknowledge it in writing, normally within three working days. We aim to have investigated and responded to your complaint within 10 working days of the date that you raised it with us or inform you if there is likely to be any delay. Please note that the timescale for responding where an honest broker is used is extended to 20 working days.

In investigating your complaint we 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 can be done to make sure the problem does not happen again.

What happens if I am unhappy with the outcome?

If you are dissatisfied with our initial response, the Health and Social Care Board offer a local resolution options which you may wish to investigate. Alternatively if you feel that local resolution has been exhausted you can take your complaint to: The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. They can be contacted by telephone on 0800 343424 or by writing to: The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, 33 Wellington Place Belfast, BT1 6HN.