

THE BLACKDOWN PRACTICE – HR & ADMIN

PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Making a complaint

If patients have any complaints or concerns about the service that they have received from the doctors or staff working for this practice, we would like to know. Our aim is to understand the complaint, try and resolve it as quickly and satisfactorily as we can and to try and prevent the problem from recurring.

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If a problem cannot be sorted out in this way and patients wish to make a complaint, we would like to know as soon as possible – ideally within a matter of days – as this will enable us to establish what happened more easily and investigate the matter effectively and fairly. If it is not possible to do this, we would want to have details of any complaint within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem; or within 12 months of a patient becoming aware of a problem, unless it is deemed there are good reasons for not making a complaint within this time limit and it is still possible to properly investigate the complaint.

The Complaints Manager for the Practice is **Karen Button, Practice Manager.**

The lead Doctor for complaint handling is **Dr Greg Barnes**

What we shall do

1. In the first instance the person complaining will be referred to the practice manager or, in her absence, one of the team leaders, or a Partner depending who is available at the time.
2. If a complaint received by the Practice relates to another organisation, the patient will be advised of this, ideally within 3 working days. Ask the patient if they want the complaint to be forwarded to the correct organisation or provide contact details if the patient prefers to contact them directly.
3. A complaint can be made orally, in writing or electronically. If the complaint is made orally, a written record must be made. The complainant may be asked to put a more complex complaint in writing or may meet the practice manager to go through the matter together. This would help to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the event that has led to the complaint. After a meeting a letter detailing the issues discussed is generally sent to the patient.
4. If a complaint is made orally and is resolved to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint, ideally no later than the end of the next working day, no further action is required. If an oral complaint is not resolved in this way, the formal procedure will be followed.
5. All other complaints will be acknowledged, orally, in writing or electronically within 3 working days or, where this is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable, with an offer to discuss the matter in person. It will be discussed with the complainant how the Practice proposes to handle the complaint, the likely period for completing the investigation and when they will receive a response. More complicated concerns may take longer to investigate and this will be discussed with the complainant.
6. A copy of the practice complaints procedure will be sent to the complainant at the time the first written response is given. For oral complaints, an offer should be made to send the complaints policy should the person wish the Practice to do so, whether the oral complaint is resolved immediately or not.

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7. All complaints will be investigated by the practice manager who will discuss the complaint with the individuals concerned and the Partners. If the complaint relates to the actions of the practice manager, the lead Doctor for complaint handling will carry out the investigation.
8. A full investigation will take place with the individual(s) involved; the complainant should be kept informed as is reasonably practical of the progress of the investigation. This is particularly important when a response to the complaint is likely to take longer than initially discussed with the complainant.
9. The results of the investigation will be put in writing and signed by the practice manager or, in her absence the lead Doctor for complaint handling or, in their absence, another Partner* reporting on the following:
 - An explanation of how the complaint has been considered
 - An apology and explanation as appropriate
 - The conclusions reached, including any remedial action thought necessary to ensure a similar incident does not occur again in the future
 - Confirmation that the Practice is satisfied that the action needed has already been, or will be, taken.
 - Details of the complainant's right to pursue the matter further.

* N.B. Staff other than the Practice Manager do not provide written responses to complaints.

10. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the internal investigation they will be invited to attend the surgery with a friend if he/she wishes to discuss the complaint and the findings of the internal investigation.
11. Written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting will be sent to the complainant.
12. If the complaint involves other organisations other than the Practice, the Practice will make provision for disclosure and co-operation with the other organisations with the patient's prior consent.
13. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the practice investigation he/she are informed of his/her right to contact NHS England as the commissioner/purchaser of GP services.

By post: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT

By email: england.contactus@nhs.net . Please state: 'For the attention of the complaints team' in the subject line.

By telephone: 0300 311 22 33

If the complainant is not content with the response from NHS England, the next step is to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to review their complaint and how it has been handled.

By post: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

By telephone: 0345 015 4033 or you can send a text to their 'call back' service: 07624 813 005, providing your name and mobile number

Via Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

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Complaints received on behalf of someone else

The Practice may receive a complaint on behalf of a patient, or former patient, who is receiving or has received treatment at the Practice. However, to investigate and respond to the complaint, the Practice must have the patient's consent, ideally written consent, or:

(a) where the patient is a child:

- by either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child;
- by a person duly authorised by a local authority to whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989;
- by a person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation by which the child is being accommodated

(b) where the patient is incapable of making a complaint, by a relative or other adult who has an interest in his/her welfare.

Additional Help and Support

The following organisations might be able to resolve patients' concerns or can tell patients more about the complaints procedure:

Patient Advice and Complaints Team (PACT) – Are a confidential service and can provide patients, family members, the public and staff with help, advice and support with concerns or comments relating to NHS services. PACT can be contacted:

By post: Patient Advice and Complaints Team, FREEPOST EX184, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QL.

By e-mail: Concerns and feedback pals.devon@nhs.net

Complaints complaints.devon@nhs.net

By telephone: 0300 123 1672 or 01392 674806

By text: text 'call back' with name and mobile number to 07789 741 099

Website: <http://www.newdevonccg.nhs.uk/pals-and-complaints-team/100081>

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy - is available to people making a complaint about NHS services. The independent health complaints advocacy service in Devon is provided by Devon Advocacy Consortium who can be contacted:

By e-mail: dac@seap.org.uk

By telephone: 0300 343 5707

Website: <https://www.devonadvocacy.org.uk/>

Annual review of complaints

Complaints received by the practice (in a summarised and anonymised form) are reviewed in partnership and staff meetings and on an annual basis by both the Practice's Patient Participation Group and by a multidisciplinary team meeting. This is to ensure that we learn lessons from complaints, that we identify any trends and use the learning from the discussion to avoid a similar incident occurring again and/or to improve our services.

Confidentiality

All complaints are to be treated in the strictest confidence. The Practice must keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints, but such records are kept separate from the patients' medical records. The fact that a patient has complained will not adversely affect their future treatment from the Practice.