

## Glebe Road Surgery

### PATIENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. If you have a complaint about the service you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in our practice, please let us know. We view complaints as an important form of feedback which enables us to improve our service and identify what we could do better.
2. For formal purposes, the NHS definition of complaints, adapted to our Practice, is that they are “an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission or decision of Glebe Road Surgery and its workforce, either oral or written, and whether justified or not, which requires a response.”
3. The complaints system we operate follows national guidelines, as set out at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint> and also at [www.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/nhse-complaints-policy-jul16.pdf](http://www.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/nhse-complaints-policy-jul16.pdf)
4. We would hope to sort out most problems easily and quickly if you raise them with us at the time they arise and with the person concerned or with the Practice Manager. This is sometimes called “informal resolution”, and can save a lot of time and effort later on.
5. But if your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a formal complaint, there are two ways of doing so:
  - (a) a complaint to the Practice, described in 6 below; or
  - (b) a complaint to NHS England, described in 7 below.

Option (a) is the more direct route, and is usually quicker. But (b) may be the right option if you are not comfortable complaining directly to the Practice or if you feel this is not appropriate.

In either case:

- (i) Anyone can complain, including young people. A family member, carer, friend or your local MP can complain on your behalf. But if someone else is going to make a complaint for you this needs to be with your permission; and, for reasons of patient confidentiality, you will need to give your permission in writing (unless you are incapable of doing so, e.g. because of illness).
- (ii) If you feel you need help in making your complaint, it is important for you to know that you have access to local “advocacy” to support you, both in making the initial complaint and throughout the process. You can contact your local council or local Healthwatch to find out about independent NHS complaints advocacy services in your area.
- (iii) You should make your complaint as soon as possible, and in any case:

- within 12 months of the incident giving rise to it; or
- within 12 months of discovering that you have cause for complaint.

## **6. Complaint to the Practice**

- (a) We would ask you to let us know about your complaint as soon as possible – ideally, within days because that will enable us to find out what happened more easily.
- (b) It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about the grounds of your complaint, with any relevant dates and times.
- (c) You should address your complaint to the Practice Manager. You can do so by letter or e-mail. Your correspondence will be acknowledged within two working days.
- (e) Normally the Practice Manager will be responsible for investigating your complaint. If however your complaint is about the Practice Manager or a service/individual for which they are directly responsible, we will make other arrangements.
- (f) When we look into your complaint, we will try to:
- find out what happened and what went wrong;
  - make sure that you receive an explanation and a full apology where this is appropriate; and,
  - identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.
- (g) If at any time during the complaint process you decide that you would like to withdraw the complaint, you can do so either orally or in writing. The Practice Manager will acknowledge this in writing.
- (h) Wherever possible we will complete our investigation into your complaint within fifteen working days of receiving it. We will then give you a written explanation. You will also receive an explanation of any lessons we have learned and/or any changes we will be making to ensure that the error does not happen again. At this stage we may offer you a meeting to discuss the problem with the Practice Manager and/or the people involved. But please bear in mind (a) that a relevant team member may be on leave and/or (b) that other teams/agencies may be involved: in such cases our response may take a little longer than our target fifteen working days.
- (i) The person investigating the complaint will also make sure that important issues/themes arising from your complaint will be shared at the next Practice meeting; and where trends have been identified these will also be shared with the Practice's Patient Participation Group. It is important to note that all information shared with the Patient Participation Group will be anonymized.
- (j) Your right to confidentiality will be respected throughout this process, as far as possible. However, we may need to share your concerns with all clinicians involved in the incident, including other agencies: in such cases we will do so on an anonymous basis where possible.

## 7. Complaints to the NHS England

(a) It is possible that you may feel more comfortable routing your complaint through someone other than the Glebe Road surgery itself, as an alternative to the route outlined in 6 above. This can be done through NHS England.

(b) You can contact NHS England via email ([england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)) or by phone on 03003 11 22 33. If you contact them by e-mail, you should state 'For the attention of the Complaints Manager' in the subject line. You should give as much information as possible, such as:

- your name and contact details
- a clear description of your complaint and any relevant times and dates
- details of the healthcare providers or services about which you are complaining
- any relevant correspondence, if applicable

(c) They will normally acknowledge your complaint within three days of receiving it. They have a 40 day target for replying with the outcome of their investigation. Please note that they may re-direct your complaint to the Practice, with a view to seeking local resolution in the first instance.

(d) Please note: this route is an alternative to the route outlined in 6 above. If you have already made a complaint to the Practice itself under the procedure in 6, NHS England will not be able to re-investigate it (but see 8 below).

## 8. Further complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint and would like to take the matter further, you may contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. This is the body which makes final decisions on unresolved complaints about the NHS in England. It is an independent service which is free for everyone to use. For further information please visit: [www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint). You can contact the Ombudsman by e-mail on [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk) or by phone on 0345 015 4033 or in writing at:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
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Updated October 2021