

Complaints Leaflet

If you have any complaint or concern about the service that you have received from the doctors or staff working within the practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure in accordance with the Department of Health 'Guidance in relation to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure (April 2023); the HSC Complaints Procedure.

Under the HSC Complaints Procedure, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response.

How to complain

Should be made in writing.

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and can be sorted out locally with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would ask you to let us know as soon as possible – ideally within a matter of days or at most a few weeks as this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. A copy of our complaint form is available on request at reception; you do not have to use it, as you may prefer to set out your complaint in your own way. We can help you to write down your complaint if you feel you need help to do so. Please do not hesitate to contact the Practice Manager, Jaclyn Still, who will be pleased to assist you.

Your complaint should be addressed to our Practice Manager, who will ensure that it is investigated thoroughly and as speedily as possible. Alternatively, you may ask to make an appointment in person where the complaints procedure will be explained to you and all your concerns listened to and dealt with promptly.

Under the HSC Complaints Procedure, complaints should normally be made within 6 months of you becoming aware of the cause for complaint, or within 12 months of the date of the event, whichever is the earlier.

What we shall do

We shall acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have this investigated and responded to within ten working days of the date when this was received. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation or a meeting with the people involved. When we investigate a complaint, we shall aim to:

- Find out what happened and what went wrong;

- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned if you would like to do this;
- Make sure you get an apology where it is appropriate;
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again;
- You should be aware that, should you make a complaint, the practice may need to provide information about you, and treatment you have received, to insurers or legal advisers;
- Patients should be aware that the Department of Health requires all GPs to forward anonymised copies of all written complaints and their respective responses for monitoring purposes.
- Please ask at reception for a copy of our Complaints Procedure.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that the practice must ensure strict adherence to the rule of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have permission to do so. Written consent from the patient concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this. This form will be given to you on request.

Complaining to the SPPG Complaints Team

We hope that, if you have a problem, 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. But this does not affect your right to approach the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us. The SPPG Complaints Team can act as an 'honest broker' or intermediary between you and the practice to help resolve your complaint. The SPPG Complaints Team can be contacted at: - SPPG Complaints Team, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS; complaints.sppg@hscni.net or telephone (028) 9536 3893.

Patient and Client Council

The Patient and Client is an independent body that can assist people in making complaints. They cannot investigate complaints, but can act as an advocate for you, provide assistance to you in drafting letters of complaint and accompany you to meetings. The Council can be contacted at: Patient and Client Council: info.pcc@pcc-ni.net; or Freephone: 0800 917 0222.

NI Public Services Ombudsman

If you are not happy with the practice's attempts to resolve your complaint or outcome of our investigation, you can progress this to the Ombudsman, who can undertake an independent investigation of your complaint. The Ombudsman will normally only investigate a complaint after all attempts to resolve this at practice level have been exhausted. If a complainant wishes to approach the NIPSO, they must do so within 6 months of receiving the Practice final response. The Ombudsman can be contacted at: -

NI Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
BELFAST
BT1 6HN

Freepost: Freepost NIPSO
Tel: Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
Tel: 028 9023 3821
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk