

Complaints Procedure Protocol

Person responsible for review of this protocol: Dr Halcyon Pope

Date of last review: 11/09/2023

Date of next review: 09/24

Version 2

Version 1.2 – change in responsible partner

Version 2 – change in responsible partner; normal response time (21 days), reasonable adjust

Version 3 - amalgamation of complaints with suggestion and complaints form

Purpose

The protocol sets out the approach of Marcham Road Health Centre (MRHC) to the handling of complaints.

This protocol is relevant to all employers and any one who works at MRHC, including non-clinical staff. Individuals training and visitors/observers on the premises must also adhere to this.

This protocol will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

Importance of having a complaints procedure

In spite of the efforts of all staff it is likely that a complaint will be made by a patient at some point. To reduce the anxiety and apprehension for both patients and staff it is crucial to have a procedure for handling complaints.

How complaints can be made

Complaints may be received in writing or orally. Where a patient is unable to communicate a complaint by either means on their own then arrangements will be made to facilitate the giving of the complaint.

Persons who can complain

Complaints can be made by patients, former patients, someone who is affected, or likely to be affected, by the action, omission or decision of individuals working at the practice, or by a representative of a patient who is incapable of making the complaint themselves.

When a complaint is made on behalf of a child, there must be reasonable grounds for the complaint being made by the representative rather than the child and the complaint must be being made in the best interests of the child. If this is not the case, then written notification of the decision not to investigate the complaint must be sent to the representative.

Time limit for making a complaint

Complaints can be made up to 12 months after the incident that gave rise to the complaint, or from when the complainant was made aware of it. Beyond this timescale it is at the discretion of the practice as to whether to investigate the matter.

Persons responsible for handling complaints

- **Responsible Person:** The Responsible Person is a partner responsible for the supervision of the complaints procedure and for making sure that action is taken in light of the outcome of any investigation. The Responsible Partner is: **Dr Halcyon Pope**.
- **Complaints Manager:** The Complaints Manager is responsible for the handling and investigation of complaints. The Complaints Manager is **Mrs Rose Moore**

Initial handling of complaints

- 1) When a patient wishes to make an oral complaint then the Complaints Manager is to arrange to meet the complainant in private to make an assessment of the complaint. The complainant is to be offered the chance to be accompanied at this meeting.
- 2) The complaint should be resolved at this meeting if possible. All complaints should be recorded in the complaints register and the implicated staff member/s (if any) is to be told about the details of the complaint.
- 3) When the complaint cannot be resolved the patient is to be asked to make a written complaint. If necessary the Complaints Manager is to write down the complaint on their behalf verbatim.
- 4) The Complaints Manager is to acknowledge a written complaint in writing within 3 working days, stating the anticipated date by which the complainant can expect a full response, normally 21 working days.

Investigation of complaint

- 1) The Complaints Manager is to discuss the complaint with the implicated member of staff to establish their recollection of events.
- 2) If the complaint is against the Complaints Manager, then the complaint is to be referred to the Responsible Person for investigation.
- 3) The complainant is to be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint with the Complaints Manager and asked if they would like to be accompanied at this meeting. If appropriate and with prior consent from the complainant, the staff member complained about can be present at that meeting. Minutes should be taken.
- 4) The timescale to respond (normally 21 working days, maximum of 6 months) is to be agreed with the complainant at that meeting and documented in the complaints register.
- 5) The full response to the complainant is to be signed by the responsible person, and include:
 - a) an explanation of how the complaint was considered;
 - b) the conclusions reached in relation to the complaint and any remedial action that will be needed;
 - c) confirmation as to whether the practice is satisfied that any action has been taken or will be taken.
- 6) If it is not possible to send the complainant a response in the agreed period it is

necessary to write to the complainant explaining why. Then a response is to be sent to the complainant as soon as is reasonably practicable.

- 7) If the complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint, then they are to be advised to contact the Health Service Ombudsman and how to do so.

Recording complaints and investigations

A record must be kept of:

- a) each complaint received;
- b) the subject matter of the complaint;
- c) the steps and decisions taken during an investigation;
- d) the outcome of each investigation;
- e) when the practice informed the complainant of the response period and any amendment to that period;
- f) whether a report of the outcome of the investigation was sent to the complainant within the response period or any amended period.

Review of complaints

Complaints received by the practice are to be reviewed at Significant Events meetings to ensure that learning points are shared.

A review of all complaints will be conducted annually by the Complaints Manager at an appropriate Significant Events meeting to identify any patterns that are to be reported to the Responsible Person.

The Complaints Manager will notify the Responsible Person of any concerns about a complaint leading to non-compliance. The Responsible Person will identify ways for the practice to return to compliance.

Publicity

The practice's arrangements for dealing with complaints and how further information about these arrangements will be publicised by the Complaints Manager. This will include how to contact independent advocacy services and the right of patients to approach Integrated Care Board. The Complaints Manager will also the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) where patients can take matters further if they are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been dealt with.

Reasonable adjustments

The Complaints Manager will supply easy read guides and forms for patients with learning disabilities and autistic people. See \\K84041dc\N:\Practice Policies and Protocols\Supporting documents

Unreasonable complainants

When faced by an unreasonable complainant, staff will take action in accordance with page 34 of the DoH's [Listening, responding, improving: a guide to better customer care](#) guidance. See \\K84041dc\N:\Practice Policies and Protocols\Supporting documents

Marcham Road Health Centre **Suggestions and Complaints Form**

Help Us Get It Right

We are constantly trying to improve the service we offer. Please could you let us know when you think we have done something well or if you have any suggestions as to how we can do something better.

Constructive suggestions help us to improve our service and are always welcome and may be handed in at reception or dropped into the suggestions box in the waiting room.

At Marcham Road Health Centre we believe care is best delivered in an atmosphere of mutual respect and we expect our staff to treat all our patients with respect and understanding, and request that patients acknowledge this by treating our staff courteously. Our receptionists try very hard to please patients, doctors and our nursing team, so if something does happen to go wrong please do not blame them, they are doing their best. Please use the suggestions box or complaints procedure to help us to ensure that the problem does not happen again.

Making a Complaint

We always try to give the best service possible, but there may be occasions when you are unhappy with the services we provide or any of the staff working within the practice. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working within this practice, please let us know by contacting the General Manager, Rose Moore. We believe this will give us the best chance of correcting whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice for all patients.

Please note that we have to respect our duty of medical confidentiality to patients. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else we will need their permission in writing, unless that patient is not capable, through age, physical or mental illness, of providing it. Dr Halcyon Pope has overall responsibility and accountability for the management of complaints against the practice and Rose Moore, General Manager, has responsibility for investigating complaints, ensuring that the statutory complaints arrangements are complied with and that remedial action is put in place.

If you need to make a complaint, please ask to speak to Rose Moore whilst you are here or please write to her. You should expect acknowledgement within three working days.

Rose Moore can be contacted by phone: Tel: 01235 522602 or in writing to the surgery: Marcham Road Health Centre, Marcham Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1BT.

We believe it important to deal with complaints quickly so we will aim to investigate and respond to your complaint within 21 working days, if it is going to take longer than this we will keep you informed.

We will try to address your concerns fully and provide you with an explanation where appropriate and discuss any action that may be needed so that you feel satisfied that we have dealt with the matter thoroughly.

Alternative options for making a complaint

We would prefer to deal with your complaint ourselves as we feel this is the best way for us to improve our service. However, there are alternative options you can use which vary depending on the NHS service you are making a complaint about.

GP practices, NHS pharmacies, NHS optometry services, NHS dentists

If your complaint is about primary care services such as GPs, dentists, opticians, pharmacy services, you can take your complaint to the commissioner of these services (the Integrated Care Board which pays for the service or care). Complaints to all Integrated Care Boards in the South East are now handled by:

South East Complaints Hub
NHS Frimley ICB
Aldershot Centre for Health
Hospital Hill
Aldershot
Hampshire
GU11 1AY.
Tel: 0300 561 0290. Email: frimleyicb.southeastcomplaints@nhs.net

Hospital Services

To complain about the service you have received from a hospital, please send your complaint directly to the appropriate hospital:

- Oxfordshire University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/feedback/pals.aspx Tel: 01865 221 473. Email: PALS@ouh.nhs.uk
- Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/about-us/contact-us/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals/ Tel: 0118 322 8338 Email: PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Other Health Services

To complain about the service you have received from Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, CAMHS or community services like district nursing, contact:

- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/support-advice/pals/ Tel: 0800 328 7971. Email: PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Advocacy service

If you need help to make your complaint you can use the NHS Complaints Advocacy service which is free, independent of the NHS and confidential. In Oxfordshire, this service is provided by Pohwer. Web site: www.pohwer.net/nhs-complaints-advocacy. The Help Hub is open from Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm (excluding bank holidays). Email: pohwer@pohwer.net Telephone: 0300 456 2370 (charged at your standard network rate) Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025. Post: PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB.

Supporting people with a learning difficulty or autism

NHS England, the health, local government and social care Ombudsman services and others are leading a project called Ask Listen Do. This is about making it easier to give feedback, raise a concern or complain if you or someone you support has a learning disability, autism or both. Their website has links to booklets containing advice and information: www.speakup.org.uk/asklistendo Email: england.asklistendo@nhs.net.

Unhappy with the outcome of your complaint?

If you are not happy with the way your complaint has been dealt with and would like to take the matter further, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) which makes final decisions on unresolved complaints about the NHS in England. It is an independent service which is free for everyone to use. Visit: www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint. Tel: 0345 015 4033. Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Version Control:

If you are reading this in hardcopy, please be aware that you may not have the latest reviewed version. For the latest version, refer to the Practice Shared drive: \\K84041dc\N:\Practice Policies and Protocols

Reviewed: 26.7.2023

Suggestion/Complaint Record

Please complete this form to give us as much information as possible in order for us to deal with this matter for you.

Name:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Contact details that you are happy for us to use:

Phone (home):

Phone(mobile):

Email Address:

Description of Event:

DATE:

TIME:

Version Control:

If you are reading this in hardcopy, please be aware that you may not have the latest reviewed version. For the latest version, refer to the Practice Shared drive:

\\K84041dc\N:\Practice Policies and Protocols

There should be copies of this form on the small table in the waiting area for you to complete. If you can't find one, please ask at Reception.