

## Who can complain

Complainants may be current or former patients, or their nominated or elected representatives (who have been given consent to act on the patient's behalf).

Patients over the age of 16 whose mental capacity is unimpaired should normally complain themselves or authorise someone to bring a complaint on their behalf.

Children under the age of 16 can also make their own complaint, if they're able to do so.

If a patient lacks capacity to make decisions, their representative must be able to demonstrate sufficient interest in the patient's welfare and be an appropriate person to act on their behalf. This could be a partner, relative or someone appointed under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 with lasting power of attorney.

## Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.

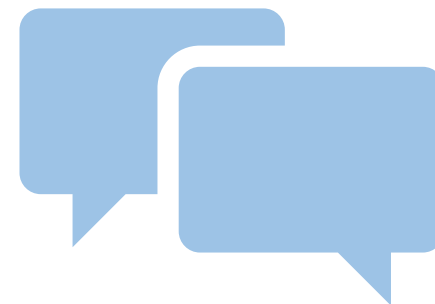
Where the investigation of the complaint requires consideration of the patient's medical records, we will inform the patient or person acting on his/her behalf if the investigation will involve disclosure of information contained in those records to a person other than the Practice or an employee of the Practice.

We keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints, but such records will be kept separate from patients' medical records.

The Stephenson Medical  
Practice  
Victoria Road Health  
Centre  
Concord, Washington  
NE37 2PU  
Tel: (0191)-4162578

# How to make a complaint

## Patient information leaflet



**The Stephenson  
Medical Practice**

## Practice complaints procedure

We make every effort to give the best service possible to all our patients. However, we are aware that things can go wrong, in these situations we would like the matter to be settled as quickly, and as amicably, as possible. Your feedback is important to us.

To have your complaint investigated, complaints must be received within 12 months of the event or as soon as you first become aware of the issue. The time limit can be extended in special circumstances.

### How do I raise a concern / informal complaint?

You can speak to any member of staff initially about your complaint, this gives you the opportunity to resolve any of your concerns without going through a formal process.

Most complaints are best resolved within the practice, and these should be made via the Management team.

## If you're considering making a complaint but need help

If you require support to make a complaint, VoiceAbility can offer both information and support. They have advocates to support people with an NHS complaint. This support is free and available at every stage of the complaints process.

Tel: 0300 303 1660

Email: [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

### Procedure

We have a two stage complaints procedure and will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. However, some matters may need further investigation.

### Stage one – Early, local resolution

At this stage, you can submit your complaint to the complaints manager either verbally, via letter, or by email.

Email: [d.partners@nhs.net](mailto:d.partners@nhs.net)

We will try to resolve your complaint within five working days if possible. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to escalate your complaint to stage two.

## Stage two – Investigation

At this stage, we will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days, and we will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be no more than 20 working days unless there is a good reason for needing more time to respond.

**If you feel you do not want to contact the surgery directly, then you can contact the NHS Integrated Care Board complaints team on:**

**Tel: 0191 512 8484**

**Email: [necsu.pccomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.pccomplaints@nhs.net)**

### Complain to the Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision, you remain dissatisfied, you may take your complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent of the NHS and free to use. It can help resolve your complaint and tell the NHS how to put things right if it has got them wrong.

The Ombudsman only has legal powers to investigate certain complaints.

Phone: 0345 015 4033

Email: [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)