



Ballater Surgery

Complaints Policy

Version	Edited by	Date issued	Next review date
6	Julia Morrison	November 2025	November 2026

1. Purpose

This policy ensures patients, carers, and the public can raise concerns or complaints about the GP practice and be assured of a fair, timely, and transparent response. The policy supports compliance with the Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009, the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations, the NHS Constitution, and the Duty of Candour. It provides assurance to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) that the practice listens, learns, and acts on patient feedback.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff working at the GP practice, including staff employed by the Primary Care Network (PCN) and working in the practice under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). Complaints relating to PCN-employed staff will be managed collaboratively between the Practice Manager and the PCN Governance Lead to ensure a consistent and coordinated response. It covers all complaints from patients, carers, visitors, or representatives and excludes staff grievances, which are handled under HR policies.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The practice complies with:

- NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 – setting out timeframes and requirements for handling complaints.
- Duty of Candour (Health and Social Care Act 2008 Regulations) – requiring openness and transparency when things go wrong.
- NHS Constitution – ensuring patients' rights to have complaints investigated and to receive an explanation and apology when appropriate.



Ballater Surgery

- Care Quality Commission (CQC) – inspection domains Caring and Responsive require evidence of robust complaints handling and learning.
- Ombudsman guidance – ensuring patients are aware of their right to escalate complaints.

4. Responsibilities

- GP Partners – overall accountability for complaints handling and learning.
- Practice Manager – designated Complaints Manager, responsible for overseeing the complaints process, maintaining records, and ensuring timely responses.
- Complaints Lead – day-to-day management of complaints, acknowledging, investigating, and drafting responses.
- All Staff – duty to escalate complaints to the Complaints Lead and treat complainants respectfully.
- PCN Governance Lead – where ARRS staff are involved, liaise with the Practice Manager to ensure coordinated handling and shared learning.
- Governance Meetings – review complaints, identify themes, and ensure learning is acted upon.

Policy Statement & Procedure

- Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, or electronically. Staff must assist patients in making complaints where required.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- Investigations will normally be completed within 20 working days; if longer is required, the complainant will be updated.
- Responses will include an explanation, apology where appropriate, and details of learning/actions taken.
- Records of complaints will be kept in a complaints log, with anonymised summaries shared at governance meetings.



Ballater Surgery

- Patients will be advised of their right to escalate to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman if dissatisfied.

5. Monitoring & Review

The Practice Manager will maintain a complaints log recording dates, issues raised, outcomes, and learning. Themes will be analysed annually and shared with staff and the PCN Governance Lead to drive improvements. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if guidance or regulations change.



Ballater Surgery

Annex A – Complaint leaflet

A patient information leaflet regarding complaints is shown overleaf.

Advocacy support

- [POhWER](#) support centre can be contacted via 0300 456 2370
- [Advocacy People](#) gives advocacy support on 0330 440 9000
- [Age UK](#) on 0800 055 6112
- Local Council can give advice on local advocacy services

Further action

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint from either South East ICB or this organisation then you can escalate your complaint to Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) at either:

Milbank Tower, Milbank
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

Citygate, Mosley Street
MANCHESTER
M2 3HQ
Tel: 0345 015 4033

Ballater Surgery

108 Chislehurst Road

Orpington, Kent, BR6 0DP

01689 826664 selicb.ballatersurgery@nhs.net

The Complaints Process

Ballater Surgery





Talk to us

Every patient has the right to make a complaint about the treatment or care they have received at Ballater Surgery.

We understand that we may not always get everything right and, by telling us about the problem you have encountered, we will be able to improve our services and patient experience.

Who to talk to

Most complaints can be resolved at a local level. Please speak to a member of staff if you have a concern and they will assist you where possible. Alternatively, ask to speak to the complaints manager, Julia Morrison, Practice Manager, but note this may need to be a booked appointment.

If for any reason you do not want to speak to a member of our staff, then you can request that the Integrated Care Board investigates your complaint. They will contact us on your behalf:

South East ICB
PO Box 64529
LONDON
SE1P 5LX
020 8176 5330
contactus@selondonics.nhs.uk

A complaint can be made verbally or in writing. A complaints form is available from reception. Additionally, you can complain via email to selicb.ballatersurgery@nhs.net.

Time frames for complaints

The time constraint on bringing a complaint is 12 months from the occurrence giving rise to the complaint, or 12 months from the time you become aware of the matter about which you wish to complain.

The Complaints Manager will respond to within three business days to acknowledge your complaint.

We will aim to investigate and provide you with the findings as soon as we can and will provide regular updates regarding the investigation of your complaint

Investigating complaints

We will investigate all complaints effectively and in conjunction with extant legislation and guidance.

Confidentiality

We will ensure that all complaints are investigated with the utmost confidentiality and that any documents are held separately from the patient's healthcare record.

Third party complaints

We allow third parties to make a complaint on behalf of a patient. The patient must provide consent for them to do so. A third-party patient complaint form is available from reception.

Final response

We will issue a final formal response to all complainants which will provide full details and the outcome of the complaint. We will liaise with you about the progress of any complaint.

Annex B – Patient complaint form

SECTION 1: PATIENT DETAILS

Surname		Title	
Forename		Address	
Date of birth			
Telephone no.		Postcode	

SECTION 2: COMPLAINT DETAILS

Please give full details of the complaint below including dates, times, locations and names of any organisation staff (if known). Continue on a separate page if required.

--

SECTION 3: OUTCOME

--

SECTION 4: SIGNATURE

Surname & initials		Title	
Signature		Date	

SECTION 5: ACTIONS

Passed to management Yes / No

Annex C – Third party patient complaint form

SECTION 1: PATIENT DETAILS

Surname		Title	
Forename		Address	
Date of birth			
Telephone no.		Postcode	

SECTION 2: THIRD PARTY DETAILS

Surname		Title	
Forename		Address	
Date of birth			
Telephone No.		Postcode	

SECTION 3: DECLARATION

I hereby authorise the individual detailed in Section 2 to act on my behalf in making this complaint and to receive such information as may be considered relevant to the complaint. I understand that any information given about me is limited to that which is relevant to the subsequent investigation of the complaint and may only be disclosed to those people who have consented to act on my behalf.

This authority is for an indefinite period.

Where a limited period applies, this authority is valid until/...../.....

SECTION 4: SIGNATURE

Surname & initials		Title	
Signature		Date	

Annex D – Acknowledgement of a complaint letter (example)

[Organisation]

[Address]

[Complainant's name]

[Complainant's address]

[Date]

Reference [Enter]

Dear [name],

Acknowledgment of complaint

Thank you for your letter [dated] regarding your complaint. We are sorry that you have felt that the standard of service at [insert organisation name] warranted your complaint. Please be advised that, whilst complaints are infrequent, when received we will thoroughly investigate and will always manage these in line with the NHS contract.

Our promise to you includes that we will:

- Keep you [or your advocate] up to date with the progress of your complaint
- We will attempt to investigate and provide a detailed response as quickly as possible. Some complaints may take longer than others, so we do not want to offer any specific timescale. However, throughout the investigation, this organisation will keep you up to date with the progress and this can be by telephone, email or letter and will be as agreed with you
- You [or your advocate] can expect to receive a quality response
- Should there be any learning outcome, you [or your advocate] will be provided with what actions have been taken to prevent any future recurrence

We are aware that you would wish for a response as soon as possible and we will endeavour to conduct a full and thorough investigation in the shortest period possible.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Complaints Leaflet. This details what you should expect, a list of advocacy services should you need any support and what to do should you not be content with the findings of this complaint.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

[Name]

[Role]

Enc: Complaints Leaflet

Annex E – Final response to a complaint letter (example)

[Organisation]

[Address]

[Complainant's name]

[Complainant's address]

[Date]

Reference [Enter]

Dear [name],

Final response to complaint

Further to my letter dated [enter], please see below the findings following a full investigation into your complaint dated [insert].

[Detail, although the response is to include the following as per section 2.19]

- a. Be professional, well thought out and sympathetic
- b. Deal fully with all the complainant's complaints
- c. Include a factual chronology of events which sets out and describes every relevant consultation or telephone contact, referring to the clinical notes as required
- d. Set out what details are based on memory, contemporaneous notes or normal practice
- e. Explain any medical terminology in a way in which the complainant will understand
- f. Contain an apology, offer of treatment or other redress if something has gone wrong. The response should also highlight what the organisation has done, or intends to do, to remedy the concerns identified to ensure that the problem does not happen again.

Please be advised that this is the final response. Should you remain dissatisfied with the findings of this investigation, then you may further complain online or in writing to [the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman \(PHSO\)](#) at either:

Milbank Tower
Millbank
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

Citygate
Mosley Street
MANCHESTER
M2 3HQ

The PHSO may be contacted via telephone on 0345 015 4033 or by using their [secure online form](#). Further details on how to make a complaint to PHSO can be sought at www.ombudsman.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

[Name]

[Role]