

# Penketh Health Centre

## Complaints Policy & Procedure

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to enable patients who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service given by the Practice, to bring this to our attention, so that we can review and rectify our service where necessary.

### **Making a Complaint**

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time they arise and this may be the approach you try first by raising the issue/asking for an explanation with/from a member of staff at the practice.

Where you are not able to resolve the issue in this way and wish to make a formal complaint you should do so, preferably in writing, as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. In any event, the complaint should be raised within 12 months of the date of the incident, or within 12 months of the date the complainant became aware of the incident, giving as much detail as you can. Complaints should be addressed to the Practice's Complaints Manager.

If you are a registered patient you can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority, see section 'Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else'.

Formal Complaints can either be raised directly with the Practice's Complaints Manager or with NHS England, who will raise the complaint with the Practice on your behalf, by writing to NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B87 9PT, e-mail: [England.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:England.contactus@nhs.net), telephone 03003 112233.

If you require any support or advice in raising a complaint you may contact Healthwatch Warrington.

### **What we do next**

We aim to settle complaints as soon as possible.

We will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days and tell you the date by which we will aim to respond.

Where the complaint has been raised with us but it is clear it is a result of another organisation's action we will, after obtaining your consent, forward it to that organisation for their investigation and response.

Although we will endeavour to look into and resolve the complaint within 28 working days you should note that this may take longer depending on the breadth of the investigations required or because e.g. the relevant practice staff are away. If the matter is likely to take longer we will let you know and keep you informed as events progress.

In the event of the Complaints Manager not being available e.g. holiday or sickness, then you will be given the opportunity to speak to another member of the management team. If unable to resolve the problem then they will pass the details to the Complaints Manager on return from leave and you can expect a response within 28 working days of their return. You will be informed of this in writing.

When investigating a complaint we will attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from this and whether we need to review our procedures.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation, e.g. the hospital, we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one co-ordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this.

You will receive a formal reply in writing and you will be offered the opportunity should you remain unsatisfied, to meet with the practices responsible officer together with the Complaints Manager to attempt to resolve the issue.

## **Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else**

We abide by strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that have assigned you to raise the complaint on their behalf (they should quote your name in the consent letter).

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent the patient giving their consent in the complaints letter.

Please note we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply.

We may still need to correspond directly with the patient, or may be able to deal direct with the third party but this depends on wording of the authority provided.

### **If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigations/response**

If you are ultimately not satisfied with the response, you have the right to take your complaint to the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent of government and the NHS. This service is confidential and free. There are time limits for taking a complaint to the Ombudsman, although they can waive them if they think there is a good reason to do so.

If you have any questions about whether the Ombudsman will be able to help you, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman may be contacted at:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

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

Website <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/contact us/>