

## **PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – Ormeau Health Centre**

Reviewed March 2023

If you have a complaint or are concerned about the Health Service treatment you have received from any of the staff or Doctors working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a Practice-based complaints procedure in accord with the Guidance in relation to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure (April 2022) [HSC Complaints Procedure]. It does not cover services provided under a private agreement between the Practice and a patient.

### **How to complain**

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the people concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, let us know as soon as possible, ideally, within a matter of days, this will help us find out what happened more easily.

Although you should make a complaint as soon as possible after the event we can consider complaints made within six months of the date of discovering the problem, provided this is made within twelve months of the incident. If it is clearly unreasonable in the circumstances to make a complaint earlier and where it is still possible to investigate the facts of the case we can consider extending this time limit.

All complaints should be made in writing and should be addressed to Claire Bateson, Practice Manager. Dr Jouanny is the clinical investigator. If your complaint is regarding or involves Dr Jouanny, you may address your complaint to the Practice Manager.

Complaints received in a foreign language will be translated to English for Practice use and the reply will be translated back to the patient's language before sending on to them. While this is, of necessity, a slower process it will help break the communication barriers that often themselves are the cause of complaints.

If your complaint is made over the telephone or verbally at the reception desk, you will be asked to put your complaint in writing and address it to the Practice Manager.

The Practice Manager may on occasion telephone you. You may also telephone the surgery during routine call time to discuss your complaint with a GP. The Practice complaints procedure will be explained to you and the Practice will ensure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will greatly assist us if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

In accord with the HSC Complaints Procedure, we are required to forward anonymised copies of all correspondence to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group ((SPPG) formerly the Health and Social Care Board) of the Department of Health for monitoring purposes.

### **What we shall do**

We shall, where possible, acknowledge your complaint, normally within two working days, and will endeavour to have looked into your complaint within ten working days of the date

when you raised it with us. If we are unable to meet these timescales you will be advised and kept informed throughout. We will offer an explanation, or a meeting with those involved. In investigating your complaint, we shall aim to:-

- Find out what happened and what went wrong.
- Enable you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this.
- Ensure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate and identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.
- All records of complaints will be kept on file in the Practice Manager's office.
- A record of suggestions/grumbles etc will be recorded in the diary held at reception and these will be discussed at regular practice meetings.
- All complaints will be kept separately from the patient's medical records.

#### Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have their permission. A note signed by the person concerned and witnessed by the patient will be needed. If this is not possible the complaint should be brought by the next of kin.

#### Complaining to the Department of Health- Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG)

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will make use of our Practice complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. This does not affect your right to approach the SPPG if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us, the contact details are set out below.

SPPG Complaints Team  
12-22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast BT2 8BS  
Telephone: 028 9536 3893 Email: [complaints.sppg@hscni.net](mailto:complaints.sppg@hscni.net)

In the event that you remain dissatisfied the practice complaint response and/or that of the SPPG and the complaints handling procedure has been exhausted, we will write to you, within two weeks to inform you of the next step you may take in contacting the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. Any complaint you wish to take to the Ombudsman must be made within six months of the exhaustion of the Practice complaints procedure.

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast BT1 6HN  
Telephone: 0800 34 34 24  
Email: [nipso@nipso.gov.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.gov.uk)

---

