Gladstone House Surgery
Complaints Procedure

Making a Complaint

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily with the person concerned, often at the time they arise, and this may be the approach you try first.

Where you are not able to resolve your complaint 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, giving as much detail as you can, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. In any event, this should be:

- Within 12 months of the incident,
- or within 12 months of you becoming aware of the matter

If you are a registered patient, you can complain about your own care. You are not normally able to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority. See the separate section in this leaflet for what to do in this case.

We are able to provide you with a separate complaint form to register your complaint and this includes a third-party authority form to enable a complaint to be made by someone else. Please ask at reception for this. You can provide this in your own format providing it covers all of the necessary aspects.

Send your written complaint in the first instance to one of the following:

Clinical Complaints:
Emily Orcheston-Findlay
Clinical Complaints Manager
McKenzie House
17 Kendal Road
Hartlepool
TS25 1QU

Admin Complaints:
Sarah Herd
Practice Manager
McKenzie House
17 Kendal Road
Hartlepool
TS25 1QU

What We Do Next

We aim to settle complaints as soon as possible.

We will usually acknowledge receipt within **three** working days. There is no specified time frame for a response to a complaint, and this will depend on the nature and complexity, but we aim to respond to all complaints within a reasonable time frame, up to a maximum of 6 months. You will receive a formal reply in writing, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue.

When looking into a complaint, we attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from this, and make it possible for you to discuss the issue with those involved if you wish to do so.

When the investigations are complete, a final written response will be sent to you.

The final response letter will include details of the result of your complaint and also your right to refer the matter further to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (details shown elsewhere in this leaflet) if you remain dissatisfied with the response.

Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else

We keep to the 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 we can deal with someone else about it. In the event the patient is deceased, then we may agree to respond to a family member or anyone acting on their behalf or who has had an interest in the welfare of the patient.

Please ask at reception for the Complaints Form, which contains a suitable authority for the patient to sign to enable the complaint to proceed. Alternatively, we will send one to you to return to us when we receive your initial written complaint.

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness, accident, or mental capacity, it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances that prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that 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. You may also find that if you are complaining on behalf of a child who is capable of making their own complaint, we will expect that child to contact us themselves to lodge their complaint.

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

Other ways to complain

If the complainant prefers not to complain directly to the provider, they can complain to the commissioner of the service, the Integrated Care Board ICB) if they prefer (previously this role was held by NHS England).

You can make a complaint to the Integrated Care Board by the following methods:
Calling 0191 512 8277
Emailing necsu.complaints@nhs.net
Or, in writing to:

Primary Care Complaints Team
North East and North Cumbria ICB
Riverside House
Goldcrest Way
Newburn Riverside Business Park
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 8NY

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint response:

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint after receiving the Practice's final response, you have the right to ask the Public Service Ombudsman (formerly the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman) to review your complaint. The Ombudsman is independent of the NHS and provides a free service to investigate complaints about NHS organisations in England.

The Ombudsman will usually only consider complaints once the local NHS complaints process has been completed and a final response has been issued by the Practice

You can contact the Ombudsman via one of the below methods:

- Tel: 0345 015 4033
- Website: https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint/making-complaint-about-nhs-england

Alternatively, correspondence can be sent to:

Public Service Ombudsman
Citygate
Mosley Street
Manchester
M2 3HQ

Other help available

You may also approach Healthwatch or the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy for help or advice regarding a complaint.

The local Healthwatch can be found at: **www.healthwatch.co.uk**

The Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service helps people to raise their concerns and complaints about NHS care and treatment. Further information and contact details can be found at: **https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/advocacy/nhs-advocacy/**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can be contacted on 01642 624719

Reasonable Adjustments

If you require information in a different format or need any reasonable adjustments to access our complaints process, please let us know. We will work with you to ensure your communication and accessibility needs are supported

Complaints relating to Private work

Complaints relating to private work will be handled separately from complaints concerning our general practice. However, we are committed to addressing these complaints within the same timeframes outlined in this policy to ensure a timely and consistent response.