

Petworth Surgery Complaints Procedure

General Provisions

The Practice will take reasonable steps to ensure that patients are aware of:

- (a) The complaints/suggestions procedure;
- (b) The role and contact details of the Primary Care Trust and other bodies in relation to complaints about services under the contract; and
- (c) Their right to assistance with any complaint from independent advocacy services.

In addition to verbal advice from Practice staff, Patients may access this information through the Practice Leaflet and other promotional materials in the Reception/Waiting area.

Who can complain

The Practice may receive a complaint made by, or (with his/her consent) on behalf of a patient, or former patient, who is receiving or has received treatment at the Practice, or:

- (a) where the patient is a child:
 - (i) by either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child,
 - (ii) by a person duly authorised by a local authority to whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989; or
 - (iii) by a person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation by which the child is being accommodated
- (b) where the patient is incapable of making a complaint, by a relative or other adult who has an interest in his/her welfare.

Employees of the Practice who are patients are to be treated no differently to the general population in any complaints procedures pertaining to their medical care. Period within which complaints can be made

The period for making a complaint is:

- (a) six months from when the event occurred; or
- (b) six months from when the issue comes to the complainant's notice, provided that this is no later than twelve months after the event concerned.

Complaints Handling

- Complaints may be received either verbally or in writing and must be forwarded immediately to the Practice Manager (or his/her stand-in if unavailable).
- The Practice Manager/stand-in must acknowledge receipt in writing within two days from when the complaint was made.
- Enquiries involving the clinician in question will then be initiated. If the Doctor or Nurse is unable to resolve the problem in association with the Practice Manager, the arbitration services offered by the CCG or BMA may be employed.

- The Practice Manager is responsible for ensuring that the complaint is properly investigated.
- The complainant must be given a written statement of the investigation and its conclusions within 14 days of receipt by the Practice Manager.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence are to be kept as evidence and for future reference.
- All complaints are discussed and minuted at the weekly meetings between the Partners and the Practice Manager.
- The issues inherent to complaints are to be disseminated to as many staff members as appropriate. Therefore, clinical and administrative colleagues can learn from complaints either in one-to-one sessions with the Practice Manager or at specially convened general meetings. 'ENCIRCLE' training afternoons are particularly useful for this purpose.

Recent lessons include:

the implementation of an improved medication checking system following a mistake re-iteration of the importance of confidentiality (even though the Surgery was proved to be not culpable in the incident concerned)

clearer explanation of appointment times/booking in the Practice Leaflet

The Complaints file contains all the relevant paperwork (including copies of correspondence) and is available for inspection/reference.

Confidentiality

All complaints must be treated in the strictest confidence

Where the investigation of the complaint requires consideration of the patient's medical records, the Practice Manager must 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.

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

Statistics and Reporting

The Practice must submit to the CCG periodically/at agreed intervals details of the number of complaints received and actioned.