

KINGSWOOD SURGERY

Practice Policy – Complaints Procedure

Date of implementation: September 2009.

Reviewed and Updated: July 2011, Sep 2011, Sep 2012, Oct 2012, Apr 2013, Nov 2013, Aug 2015, April 2017, Sep 2019, Oct 2021, Nov 2022, Aug 2023

Persons responsible for implementation and review: Practice Manager

Background

The NHS “Practice Based” complaints procedure has been designed to deal with complaints quickly and at practice level where possible. The complaints procedure was previously adapted to meet the requirements following the Wilson Report then subsequently updated in line with national changes including 2009 Regulations.

- Information is provided to patients via posters, website and practice leaflet to advise how to make a formal complaint.
- The Practice Manager oversees the process of receiving and responding to each complaint to ensure a clear comprehensive and timely response is supplied.
- Complaints are acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt.
- Investigations are completed as quickly as possible, and a formal response provided to the complainant.
- Written consent is obtained from the patient (unless this is impossible, in exceptional cases) prior to responding to a complaint if the complainant is not the patient.
- Complainants can complain direct to us as the Service Provider or to NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) as the Service Commissioner. A complaint can only be investigated once by one or other organisation.
- If the complainant is not happy with the response, they have the right to take their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent of government and the NHS, and this service is confidential and free (see below).

Process for Formal Written Complaints:

All formal complaints should be made in writing and addressed to the Practice Manager. Receipt will be acknowledged as quickly as possible and within three working days. If possible, the practice will conduct their investigation and provide a full response to the complaint at this time. The Practice Secretary will issue acknowledgement letters in the absence of the Manager using appropriate templates.

The Practice Manager will coordinate the provision of a response. For administrative issues it is normal for the Practice Manager to respond. For clinical matters or matters relating directly to a named doctor, the doctor would produce a response. This would be agreed with the Practice Manager before sending.

If an investigation will take longer than three working days, it will be conducted promptly and thoroughly. We will provide an indication regarding when a response can be expected if possible.

All responses prepared by the Practice Manager are seen and approved by at least one of the Partners, prior to sending to the complainant.

All information on complaints is held centrally by the Practice Manager. An annual return is supplied to NHS England. Quarterly complaints review meetings are held with all available staff. Details/examples of complaints and mistakes are discussed with staff including at staff meetings in

Updated August 2023

For Review August 2025

order to prevent avoidable incidents reoccurring. Records are retained electronically for a period of ten years.

Each complaint is considered carefully. In the event of a vexatious complainant extra consideration will be given regarding the possible cause and potential solutions. The offer of one meeting to resolve all issues would be considered with the production of a final written response. The Practice would consider inviting a third party eg CloverLeaf or Patient Relations or Patient Experience team representative to support the process and complainant to help retain focus, identify issues and hopefully resolve the complaint.

Process for Informal Verbal Complaints:

In the case of an initial complaint made verbally, or minor grievances and grumbles expressed verbally, staff are advised to try and resolve and to;

- Listen attentively.
- Remain calm and respond in a thoughtful and polite manner.
- If more than just a “grumble” ie if the complainant remains dissatisfied or the matter is serious/complex, then the complainant should be advised to put the details of their concerns or complain in writing addressed to the Practice Manager for it to be handled as a formal complaint.
- Provide details of Cloverleaf Advocacy (see below) if appropriate or direct enquiries to the ICB (see below).
- Avoid confrontation/disruption in the surgery. Complaints should be dealt with away from the main area in a quiet location whenever possible. Be aware of maintaining your own safety eg ensure colleagues are aware.
- Deal constructively with the complaint. Be sympathetic and professional. Explain clearly the standards that we try to achieve. In cases of obvious minor error apologise for it and try to rectify the problem as quickly as possible.
- Resolve the issue wherever possible – eg advising the named doctor or Duty Dr of the concern in cases where the level of patient care was the factor eg prescribing errors, no visit made when requested, patient feels they should have been seen sooner, outstanding clinical concern etc.
- Record details of verbal complaints on ‘Record of Verbal Complaint Form’ (*print template from the Practice Shared Documents folder*) and give to the Practice Manager.
- If the issue is not resolved informally and the person intends to make a formal complaint advise the Practice Manager as quickly as possible giving as many details provided as possible – use the Record of Verbal Complaint Form where possible.

If a member of staff feels that comments are more than a patient simply “grumbling” then they should follow the above procedure.

Complaints Manager : Liz Walker, Practice Manager
Responsible Partner: Dr. Ruth Kirby (Senior Partner)

Useful Contacts:

If a patient, carer or relative wishes to complain about this Practice but not directly to us, refer them to the ICB

Tel: 01904 555999, email hnyicb.experience@nhs.net

The Experience Team
Humber & North Yorkshire ICB
Health Place
Wrawby Road
Brigg
DN20 8GS

The Patient Experience Team at Harrogate Foundation Trust

Tel: **01423 555499**

thepatientexperienceteam@hdfnhs.uk

Office Hours Monday- Friday 09:30 -16:00

They: - Handle problems related to the hospital, discharge arrangements, admissions and outpatient

attendances/clinics.

- Deal with complaints, queries, patient problems, feedback, and concerns
- Includes the team formerly known as 'PALS' (Patient Advisory Liaison Service)

Cloverleaf Independent Health Complaints Advocacy

1 Devonshire Court
Green Lane Trading Estate
Clifton
York YO30 5PQ

The Independent Health Complaints Service is a free, independent, professional advocacy service for all North Yorkshire residents who want to make a complaint about healthcare commissioned or provided by the NHS in England.

Tel: 0300 012 4212 (Mon – Fri 9am -5pm, outside these times you can leave a message)

Fax: 0300 666 012

Email: NHScomplaints@cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk

Website: www.cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service

4 Devonshire Court
Green Lane Trading Estate
Clifton
York
YO30 5PQ

The Ombudsman can be contacted via their helpline 0345 015 4033,

Email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk or

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Updated August 2023

For Review August 2025

KINGSWOOD SURGERY
14 Wetherby Road, Harrogate HG2 7SA

RECORD OF VERBAL/INFORMAL COMPLAINT

Name/Address of complainant

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Name/Address of patient if different from above (patient consent must be obtained before any info about the patient can be given to the complainant)

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Date when complaint was made.....

Details of the Complaint

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What was done to resolve the complaint?

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Is the person make the complaint satisfied?

Name of member of staff

Job title

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Signature of complainant Date