

Feedback, Concerns, Comments and Complaints Procedure

At Church Place Surgery our aim is to give the best possible care and treatment to our patients. We welcome feedback and comments about our services and aim to deal with any concerns or complaints promptly, courteously and efficiently. We consider all feedback, comments, concerns and complaints as a positive way of looking at what we do and making changes to improve our service to patients. All views will be taken seriously and our procedures are in line with NHS Complaints Procedure.

Responsibilities

The practice Feedback and Complaints Officer is Lorna Currie, Practice Manager, Church Place Surgery, 6 Church Place, Moffat, DG10 9ES. Telephone 01683 220197.

Feedback, Comments and Concerns

We want patients to let us know if something is important to them, such as:

- what do they think about the care and treatment they have received;
- what have we done well;
- whether they have any concerns, e.g. about their appointment times or the facilities at the practice;
- if they have any suggestions to help us improve things;
- if they don't understand something and need more information about our services.

Patients can tell us by:

- talking to any member of staff;
- contacting the Patient Advice and Support Service (see under Contacts);
- contacting the local NHS Board (see under Contacts).

We will use the information supplied to improve the services we provide.

Complaints about NHS treatment

Patients can make a complaint about

- NHS care or treatment they have had or are having at the practice;
- Our services or facilities;
- A member of staff;
- How services in the local area are organised, if this has affected their care or treatment.

Patients cannot use this complaints procedure

- If they are taking legal action about the issue they want to complain about.

Time limits

Normally, patients must make their complaint:

- within 6 months of the event they want to complain about; but no longer than 12 months after the event or
- within 6 months of finding out that they have a reason to complain

How to make a complaint:

- Patients can complain in person, by phone, or in writing. Please note that if they fax or email other people may be able to see their personal information.
- If they can they should first talk to a member of staff involved with their care. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint on the spot.
- If they are unable to talk to the member of staff involved with their care, they should be put in touch with the Practice Manager.
- If they don't want to complain to anyone in the practice, they can contact the local Health Board, the Patient Advice and Support Service or the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (see under Contacts) for advice.
- When making their complaint, they should give:
 - their full name and address (and the patient's name if they are acting on behalf of someone else, see under Complaining on someone's behalf);
 - as much helpful information as possible about what happened, where it happened and when, and what they would like to have done about it;
 - their preferred method of communication; and
 - consent from the patient, if they are making the complaint on behalf of the patient.

What we will do:

- We will try to sort out the complaint on the spot.
- If we cannot do this we will write to the patient within 3 working days acknowledging the complaint. In the letter we will:
 - include contact details for the complaints officer
 - tell them what action we will take to look into the complaint;
 - offer the opportunity to talk to a member of staff;
 - let them know when we will respond (within 20 working days);
 - give information about advice and support available to help with the complaint, e.g. the Patient Advice and Support Service.
- We will keep information about the complaint confidential. We will advise patients that we may have to talk to other NHS staff or show them their medical record. If the patient does not want us to share information from their medical record they should be informed that it may make it more difficult to look into the complaint.
- We will keep a record of the patients details and the complaint and use it to help improve our services, and for statistical purposes.

Our response:

- We will investigate the complaint and write with a full response within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. If we are unable to keep to this timescale we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed
- Our response will let the patient know the result of the investigation. We will:
 - show that we have looked into the complaint and reply to all the points raised;
 - offer an apology if things have gone wrong;
 - explain what we will do to stop what the patient complained about happening again;
 - if necessary, explain why we cannot do anything more about some parts of the complaint;

- offer the opportunity to talk to a member of staff if there is anything in the letter the patient does not understand;
- Include information about the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in case they are unhappy with our response or the way we have handled the complaint should they want to take things further.

Complaining on someone's behalf

A person can complain for someone else if they:

- have the patients consent to complain – this will be required in writing;
- are a parent, guardian or main carer of a child and the child is not mature enough to understand how to complain;
- have a welfare power of attorney or a welfare guardianship order for someone who cannot make decisions for themselves, and the order specifies that they have the power to make a complaint about healthcare;
- are a relative of, or had a relationship with, a patient who has died and they are concerned about how they were treated before they died; or
- are acting as an advocate for the patient.

If a patient changes their mind after making a complaint

Patients can change their mind about making a complaint at any time. They should be encouraged to notify us in writing or by email at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible a phone call will do.

Support for patients with a complaint

Patient Advice and Support Service

Patients can speak to someone for independent advice about their rights and responsibilities when using NHS services, including help to make a complaint. If they wish they can contact the local Patient Advice and Support Service which is available through the local Citizens Advice Bureau (see under Contacts).

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Services in the form of mediation or conciliation may be used where both parties feel this would help resolve the complaint. In these situations the Practice Manager will liaise with the Health Board (see under Contacts).

If patients are not happy with our response to their complaint

If patients are unhappy with our response, or if they are not happy with the way we are dealing with their complaint, e.g. if they think we are taking too long, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to consider the complaint further.

- The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints more than 12 months after the patient became aware of the matter they want to complain about. Sometimes this time limit will not apply.
- The SPSO cannot look at matters that have been or are being considered in court.
- The SPSO does not take up all cases and will decide whether or not to investigate the complaint further.

Equality and Diversity

The application of this procedure will be implemented on an equitable basis irrespective of race, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender or any disability or sensory impairment.

Contacts

NHS Dumfries & Galloway Health Board:

Patient Feedback and Complaints Coordinator
NHS Dumfries & Galloway
Crichton Hall
Bankend Road
Dumfries
DG1 4TG
Phone: 01387 272733
E-mail: dq.feedback@nhs.net

Patient Advice and Support Service

This service is available through Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) www.cas.org.uk/patientadvice
The local CAB is located at:

Annan CAB – Moffat outreach (available Wednesdays, appointment only 11am-1pm)
Town Hall
Moffat
DG10 9UK.

Alternatively there is a CAB service in Dumfries located at:

81-85 Irish Street
Dumfries DG1 2PQ.

Opening Hours: Monday to Wednesday 9am-5pm, Thursday 9am-7pm and Friday 9am-4.30pm

Phone (for both sites): 0300 303 4321

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

In person: 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9am – 5pm; Tuesday 10am – 5pm

By post: FREEPOST EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR (no stamp required)

By phone: Freephone 0800 377 7330

Website: www.spsso.org.uk