



BHWC Complaints Policy

Introduction

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 oblige NHS organisations to have arrangements in place to deal with complaints. The Health Act 2009 places a duty on NHS Organisations (including contractors) to "have regard to the NHS Constitution".

The NHS Constitution sets out the following rights for patients:

- To have the right to have any complaint about NHS services dealt with efficiently and to have it properly investigated
- To have the right to know the outcome of any investigation of a complaint
- To have the right to take the complaint to the Independent Health Service Ombudsman if not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled by the NHS organisation.

There are two stages of complaints handling:

1. Local resolution at the practice (recommended initial stage of complaints process).
2. NHS England or NHS Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Contact Brighton & Hove Wellbeing Centre:

Telephone: 01273 772020 for the Complaints Manager

Post: BHWC, 18-19 Western Road, Hove BN3 1AE

Email: complaints.bhwc@nhs.net

Main provisions of the Regulations

- Patients wishing to complain may do so in writing or electronically to either the practice or NHS England as commissioner.
- Complaints can be made within 12 months of an incident occurring or them becoming aware of the problem.
- Oral complaints that are satisfactorily resolved no later than the next working day are not subject to the regulations.
- Complaints can be made by patients or anyone affected by the actions, omissions or decisions of the practice, whether on their own behalf or by a representative. In the case of a representative, the practice must be satisfied that he/she is acting in the best interests of the person on whose behalf the complaint is being raised. If the practice decides this is not the case, the complainant will be notified in writing and an explanation given.
- Complainants can direct their complaint directly to the CCG, NHS England, or CQC rather than to the practice but these organisations are obliged to notify the practice.
- All NHS organisations (including voluntary and independent sector organisations under contract) are all governed by the same legislation therefore co-ordinated complaint handling should be easier. If a complaint is received that involves other organisations, the practice should, with the patient's consent, copy the complaint and the acknowledgement letter to the organisations concerned.

Policy Objectives

- Ensure patients are aware of the right to complain.
- Ensure patients know how and to whom to complain.
- Ensure patients understand how the complaint will be handled and the timeframe.
- Ensure there is a robust system in the practice to respond, record and review complaint.

Procedure

- Patients will be encouraged to give feedback to the practice. The process for doing so will be advertised in the Practice leaflet and on signage in the waiting room.
- An information leaflet is also available for patients to take away which gives details of how and to whom the complaint can be made.
- Where a complaint is made orally, the complaint shall be recorded, and a copy of the written record given to the complainant.

- The complaint shall be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and may be made orally or in writing.
- When acknowledging the complaint, we will offer to discuss the complaint, with the complainant, at a time to suit them. We will advise the manner in which the complaint will be investigated and the likely timescale for this investigation and when the complainant is likely to receive a response.
- If the complainant does not accept the offer of a discussion, then we will determine the response time and notify the complainant in writing.
- The investigation of the complaint will be made in the most appropriate manner and shall be conducted efficiently, at all times keeping the patient up to date with progress. As soon as possible after completion of the investigation, the complainant will be sent a written response.
- The response will include an explanation of how the complaint has been considered, conclusions reached and how they may affect the complainant. It will confirm any actions that need to be taken as a consequence of the complaint. If local resolution has not been reached, it will identify the right to take the complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman.

Reporting

- The practice will undertake an annual review of complaints.
- An annual report will be produced for the CCG giving details of:
 1. Number of complaints received
 2. Summary of subject matter
 3. Summary of outcomes
 4. Lessons learned and any improvements made
 5. Way complaints are handled
 6. Number of complaints passed to Ombudsman

Responsible Officers

The Complaints Manager for the practice is Assistant Practice Manager, Hannah Stakim.

The Responsible Partner for the practice is Dr Laura Marshall-Andrews.

Both officers have a duty to ensure complaints are handled in compliance with the regulations.

The Health Service Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and Government.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 0345 0154033

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

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