

Spring House Medical Centre **PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We would hope that any problems you may have with the surgery can be sorted out quickly and easily. We will always try to help with these before they become an issue but if you feel that you have good reason to make a formal complaint against the practice, this letter sets out what to do next and what to expect from us.

We operate a complaints procedure as part of the NHS system and this meets nationally laid down criteria. In turn we need to know as soon as possible about any grievance you may have about us so that we can deal with the matter quickly and effectively. Your first course of action therefore is to address your complaint to the practice manager.

You may instead direct your complaint to NHS England who can investigate and manage the complaint. Their email address is england.contactus@nhs.net. They can also be contacted on 0300 311 22 33 or NHS England, P O Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT.

Please note that your complaint may be shared with the Commissioning Support Unit. If you prefer not to share information about your complaint please let us know.

You may also seek help in making a complaint by contacting one of the following bodies:

- The Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) which is located in Hatfield
- The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) POhWER
- NHS England 0300 311 22 33
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Healthwatch Herts can also provide support with any complaints and they are known as the independent voice for health and social care in Hertfordshire.

What we will do

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days and aim to have investigated your complaint within ten working days from the date we received it. We aim to resolve the problem as far as possible and identify what we can do to prevent a similar situation occurring again.

The surgery will need to complete all the paperwork. These will include a problem Report, outlining the type of complaint and a Complaint Form noting your personal details and/or those of the complainant. We need this information to deal with your grievance properly. We will then acknowledge the complaint, complete an Action/Summary Sheet showing the nature of the investigation and what we propose to do. We will then write to you with the details of our investigation.

Should an interview/meeting be necessary, we will complete an Interview Sheet listing what all parties have said and agreed. At this point we hope to resolve the matter and would ask you to complete a satisfaction questionnaire. If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on 0845 015 4033.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have their permission to do so: a note signed by the person in question will be needed, unless they are incapable due to illness, from providing this.

We aim to give good service at all times to our patients and assure you that every effort will be made to sort out any differences we may have to a satisfactory conclusion.

MORE INFORMATION.....

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE NHS

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from the NHS you are entitled to make a complaint, have it considered, and receive a response from the NHS organisation concerned. The NHS complaints procedure described in this document applies to the NHS in England.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) has been established in every NHS Trust in England. Although PALS are not part of the complaints procedure as such, they might be able to resolve your concerns informally or can tell you more about the complaints procedure and independent complaints advocacy services.

Any concerns which you raise will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will be investigated in a manner which will have no bearing on any future treatment you receive.

The NHS complaints procedure covers complaints made about any matter connected with the provision of NHS services by NHS organisations or primary care practitioners (GP's, dentists, opticians or pharmacists). The procedure also covers services provided overseas or by the private sector where the NHS has paid for them.

WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

A complaint can be made by a patient or person affected, or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of an NHS organisation or primary care practitioner. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient or person, with their written consent.

LOCAL RESOLUTION – FIRST STAGE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is known as 'local resolution' and therefore in the first instance your complaint should be made to the organisation providing the service i.e. your GP surgery, practice or hospital, as it is hoped that most complaints can be addressed as soon as possible. However, if you feel you are unable to directly approach the NHS provider to which your complaint relates, you can ask the CCG to investigate your complaint instead.

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff (e.g. doctor, nurse, or practice manager) or someone else e.g. PALS. They may be able to resolve your concerns without the need to make a formal complaint and provide you with the answers that you want over the telephone. You can also write to the Ephedra Healthcare Ltd board of Directors if you wish to make a complaint about any of the services provided at Spring House Medical Centre. They can be reached by writing to Spring House Medical Centre but clearly marking your complaint as private and for the attention of the Ephedra Director – Dr S Price.

However, if you want to continue with your complaint you can do this orally or by writing to the NHS organisation concerned. If you make your complaint orally a written record should also be made by the complaints team.

Once your complaint has been received by the practice or ICB you should expect an acknowledgement letter with the relevant contact's details in order that your complaint can be discussed in more detail and together with your case co-ordinator you can agree a way forward. If you feel you are unable to talk about your complaint, or you wish for all contact to be in writing, then please let them know. During that first contact, either on the telephone or in writing, you should expect to be informed of how long it will take to look into

your concerns, however for the majority of cases, a response to a complaint should take twenty-five working days maximum.

MEDIATION

If you are unhappy with the responses you have received, you may use the Mediation Service. This is a free, confidential service, which provides the complainant/patient with the opportunity to talk to an independent person regarding the outstanding issues relating to their complaint. The Mediator would then liaise with the organisation concerned and where possible reach an understanding and an agreement between both parties. If appropriate, the Mediator may take advice from an independent professional adviser on any clinical aspects of the complaint.

Mediation can be requested by either party to a complaint but can only take place with agreement of both parties.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW – SECOND STAGE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

If you are unhappy with the responses you have received to your complaint under Local Resolution, you can ask the Health Service Ombudsman to look into your concerns. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and Government, and can be contacted at:

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
0345 015 4033 www.ombudsman.org.uk email@ phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER ADVICE AND HELP?

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
HPFT Head Office
The Colonnades
Beaconsfield Rd
Hatfield
Herts
AL10 8YE

Please ask to speak to the PALS Officer on Tel: 01707 253916. Their opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9am – 3pm

If your complaint relates to the Trust, please contact them on the following;

East and North Herts Trust (Lister, UTC and Hertford hospital)
PALS team
Lister Hospital
Corey's Mill Lane
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 4NB

Tel: 01438 284678

The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)
POhWER
Hertlands House
Primett Road
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 3EE
0845 456 1082
