

Kintbury & Woolton Hill Surgery COMPLAINTS POLICY

General Principles

We aim to always provide the best possible service to everyone who attends our practice. However, we are aware that things can sometimes go wrong. If this is the case, we would wish for the matter to be settled as quickly, and as amicably, as possible perhaps with a meeting to discuss the matter. Our aim is to work with you to put things right. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all patients (or their representatives) who have a cause to complain about any of their care or treatment at our GP practice understand how they make a complaint. We also aim to reassure the complainant that they can expect a truthful and complete response and an apology, where appropriate.

Who can a formal complaint be made to?

You have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of NHS care, treatment or service that we provide. If you are unhappy with an NHS service, it's often worthwhile discussing your concerns early on with the provider of the service, as they may be able to sort the issue out quickly. Most problems can be dealt with at this stage, but in some cases, you may feel more comfortable speaking to someone not directly involved in your care.

If you have a complaint about the care we have provided, you can complain to us directly **or** you may complain to the NHS commissioner of the services, which is the body that pays for the NHS services you use.

You cannot apply to both.

If you do not feel comfortable complaining directly to us, please contact the NHS Commissioner of Services for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) by contacting **Berkshire West** via their website [Make a complaint | BOB ICB](#): Email: bobicb-bw.palscomplaints@nhs.net Tel: 0118 982 2720

However, we would like to encourage you to raise any complaints with us as soon as possible. This will allow us the opportunity to respond to your complaint in the first instance at a local level and if we can, try to put it right for you. If you chose to complain to us, you may do so by speaking to someone at our practice, ideally raising your concern with one of our Surgery Manager's in the first instance, or you can complain via our website <https://www.kintburyandwooltonhillsurgeries.co.uk/> or by writing/sending an email addressed to the Practice Manager via our surgery.

Ordinarily, a complaint should be made within 12 months from either the date of the incident, or the date that the complainant first knew about it. However, a complaint should not be automatically barred on the basis that it is "late". The Responsible Person should still consider the complaint if:

- The complainant has good reason for making the complaint "late"; and
- It is possible to investigate the complaint effectively, despite the delay.

Anyone can complain, including young people, a family member, carer, friend or your local MP can complain on your behalf with your permission. GP practices are required by law (*the regulations**) to have arrangements in place for dealing with complaints. Complaints must be properly investigated and dealt with efficiently. Complainants must:

- Be treated with respect and courtesy and not discriminated against.
- Receive a timely and appropriate response to their complaint.
- Be told the outcome of any investigation and;
- Be told about any action taken arising from the outcome of their complaint.

**1 Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*

The **Responsible Person** for non-clinical complaints is the **Practice Manager** who may delegate their practical responsibilities to the **Deputy Practice Manager**.

The **Responsible Person** for clinical complaints is the **Senior Partner**, who may delegate their practical responsibilities to another partner or the Practice Manager.

The **Surgery Managers** are **Complaints Managers**, accountable for recording and responding to complaints and informing the Responsible Persons of the complaint in the first instance.

Patients will be made aware of this policy and copies of our Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure are posted on the waiting room notice boards and on the Practice's website.

Practical Issues

1. We have suggestion boxes in both surgery waiting rooms, inviting people to make comments, and suggestions. We also encourage feedback asking patients to tell us about their experience on our website.
2. Whenever a patient makes a verbal complaint or comment, the Surgery Manager's should be informed. The patient may be taken to a private area, if deemed appropriate, and time will be given to hear the comment or complaint at a convenient time. If this is not considered acceptable, the patient may request an appointment to see the Practice Manager or the Deputy Practice Manager.
3. At the outset, the patient will be offered a copy of the Practice's Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure or advised where they may download them, explaining that these provide contact details for the appropriate advocacy services, the BOB ICB and how to escalate their complaint if they are unhappy with the outcome.
4. For verbal complaints, a written record of the discussion is made, including the name of the complainant, the subject matter of the complaint and the date on which it was made are recorded internally.
5. To maintain medical confidentiality a person complaining on behalf of someone else must have that person's permission in writing to do so (unless they cannot provide this because of illness or lack of capacity).
6. Timescales:
 - All complaints (verbal and written) are acknowledged in writing within **three working days**.
 - A date for the final response will be agreed between the Practice Manager/Deputy Practice Manager with the complainant.
7. When acknowledging a formal complaint requiring detailed investigations, the Practice Manager/Deputy Practice Manager may send the patient a draft Complaints Plan, with an invitation to discuss it (within a timescale). The Plan will set out:
 - Details of the complainant/patient/issues of concerns
 - Confirmation of consent (if on behalf of another patient)
 - Summary of issues
 - Outcome aimed for
 - How the investigation will be arranged (what we will do, people to speak to)
 - The time scale by which we plan to complete the investigation (there is no fixed rule, but patient should be informed if the date slippages)
 - Any special requirements.

8. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Practice Manager/Deputy Practice Manager will try to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the patient. If the complaint relates to a clinical matter the Practice Manager will involve the doctor concerned and the Senior Partner. If the complaint relates to a particular member of the practice team, that person will also be involved, where possible.
9. The complainant will be informed of the outcome, usually by letter signed by the Responsible Person for complaints and may be invited to a meeting at the surgery to discuss it. The letter will include details of:
 - How the complaint was considered.
 - The conclusions reached and any remedial action required.
 - Any failures in service, why they occurred, how to prevent them happening again.
 - Confirmation that any action required has been, or will be, taken.
 - If the patient is not satisfied with how the complaint has been resolved, they may then contact the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)**, if he/she wishes” and **not NHS England**.
10. Issues raised by patients will be routinely discussed at practice meetings.
11. A separate **e-folder** is kept for complaint records, **they will not be filed in patients’ medical records**. The e-file is kept for 10 years from completion of the action then deleted, or as advised by a legal advisor, as per the Record Retention Schedule.
12. An analysis of complaints will be used to facilitate discussions at a practice meeting, ideally on an annual basis.
13. ICBs collate, record, and submit annual returns of all GP written complaints.

Duty of Candour

As a practice we understand our duty to respond to harm and our duty of candour. We will inform patients promptly and openly of any significant harm that occurs during their care, whether or not the information has been requested and whether or not a complaint has been made. We treat complaints from patients, or their supporters, with courtesy and respect, and recognise the value of complaints for monitoring and improving care quality. We will respond to complaints promptly, openly and honestly and cooperate fully with local complaints procedures, acknowledging harm and offering redress, where appropriate.

Summary of Administrative Procedures

- (i) Practice staff will follow the internal Complaints Procedure (*Protocol on the Care Navigation Toolkit*).
- (ii) The Practice Management team will acknowledge all formal complaints in writing **within 3 working days**. These may be verbal, written or emailed.
- (iii) Ensure patient can access Practice Complaints Policy & Complaints Procedure online, or issue with correspondence.
- (iv) Verbal complaint: practice staff will make a written record of the conversation, including the name of the complainant, their EMIS number, the subject matter and the date on which complaint was made.
- (v) If necessary, the practice will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint.
- (vi) Following the investigation, the practice will respond to the complainant in writing, within a reasonable timeframe; letter to be signed by Responsible Person for complaints, or their delegated deputy.

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