



THE GUILDHALL & BARROW SURGERY

Patient Complaints Procedure -Patient Information Leaflet

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of the NHS system of dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria (NHS Complaints Procedure, England, 1st April 2009).

How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know **as soon as possible**, ideally, within a matter of days or at most a few weeks, because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

- within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem.

Complaints should be addressed to the Departmental Lead in the first instance. Clinical queries should be addressed to the practice management team. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment to speak to the management team in order to discuss your concerns. We will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. If the staff member you have requested to speak to is unavailable, then another member of the practice management team will assist you. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint. The Senior GP Partner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the complaints procedure.

What we shall do

If you have a verbal complaint which is resolved within 24 hrs, it will be recorded but the practice is not required to provide a written acknowledgement.

If your complaint was made in writing or electronically, it will be acknowledged by the practice within **3 working days**, either in writing or verbally. The acknowledgement may also include an invitation to meet with the management team, in order to decide how the complaint should be handled and the timeframe for the resolution.

We shall then investigate your complaint, and by doing so, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this;
- make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.
- discuss the complaint at the next practice Significant Event Meetings so all staff groups can learn from what went wrong.

The findings of the investigation will be provided to you in writing. We aim to do this within six months, in line with the NHS complaint response timeframes. If you remain unhappy with the outcome, you are entitled to take your complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman.

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 his or her permission to do so. The practice will request that a consent form signed, by the person concerned, is given to the practice before the investigation can begin. If the person concerned is incapable to give their consent (because of illness or they are too young), then their next of kin must give consent.

Taking your complaint further

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will give us a chance to put right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. If you feel, after our investigation and conclusion, that you are not happy with the outcome, you are entitled to contact the Health Service Ombudsman, who will consider your complaint further.

The Ombudsman can be contacted as follows:

- Complaints helpline: 0345 015 4033 (Mon-Thurs 8.30am – 5.00pm, Fridays 8.30am – 12pm)
- Fax: 0345 061 4000
- <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint> (for more information and to fill in a complaint form online).

Other Agencies include:

The NHS Complaints Advocacy for Suffolk (POhWER Suffolk Advocacy Service)

- email: nhscomplaints@pohwer.net
- Tel: 0300 456 2370 (Helpline Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm)
- Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025
- Minicom: 0300 456 2364
- Write to: PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB
- Website: <https://www.pohwer.net/suffolk-advocacy-service>

NHS England:

You may also make your complaint directly to NHS England, who commission our service:

- By telephone: 03003 11 22 33
- By email: england.contactus@nhs.net
- By post: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT