

## **PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We always try to provide the best service possible, but there may be times when you feel this has not happened. The following information explains our complaints procedure, drawn up to respond to patients' grievances.

Our practice procedure is not able to deal with questions of legal liability or compensation. We hope you will use it to allow us to investigate, and if necessary, correct any problems that you have identified, or mistakes that have been made. If you use this procedure it will not affect your right to complain to any other organisation detailed in this procedure.

This procedure only covers complaints about our service. Should you wish to complain about any other service provider, you should contact them directly in the first instance. If you are unsure of the contact numbers, please try their head office for advice on how to make your complaint.

### **WHO CAN COMPLAIN?**

Please note that we must respect our duty of confidentiality to patients. If you wish to make a complaint on behalf of one of our patients, we must first gain their consent to discuss their circumstances. We do understand that, in some circumstances, patients are unable to complain for themselves for example if they are elderly or children or if they are vulnerable. We are happy to accept a complaint made by a third party if we can be sure that they are acting according to the wishes of the patient or in their best interests.

Consequently, we are willing to accept complaints in writing as follows:

- where the patient is a child
  1. From either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child or parental responsibility
  2. From a person duly authorised by a local authority to whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989
  3. From a person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation by which the child is being accommodated
- where the patient is incapable of making a complaint, by a relative or other adult who has an interest in their welfare

### **HOW CAN YOU COMPLAIN?**

It makes the most sense for you to come to us first if you have a complaint about our services, since only we can sort out a problem with our services, and we can only do that, if we know about it. If you wish to make a complaint these must be written complaint. This ensures that we can understand the specifics of any complaint and

be sure to answer them comprehensively and accurately. If you wish to make a complaint in person at the surgery, please ask to speak to one of the supervisors who may be able to resolve the complaint in the first instance. For any escalation of if you require a formal response by the manager on behalf of the Partners, it must be made in writing.

## **WHEN CAN YOU COMPLAIN?**

It is better to make the complaint as soon as possible. A complaint should be made:

- Within 12 months of the event or
- Within 12 months of realising you have something to complain about.

We will investigate a complaint which is made more than 12 months after the event but cannot guarantee that we will be able to offer a full response due to the passage of time. Consideration of whether a previously investigated case should be re-opened will only happen if further additional information comes to light.

## **HOW WILL YOUR COMPLAINT BE MANAGED?**

You will receive an acknowledgment within 48 hours.

We believe it is important to deal with all complaints swiftly so you should usually receive a full explanation within two working weeks. Occasionally it may take longer, since any staff involved in the matter may be absent, but we will keep you informed of the progress throughout.

If we feel that a meeting would be appropriate, you may bring a friend or relative with you to the meeting.

## **UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS**

Where a complainant becomes aggressive or, despite following the Complaints Procedure, unreasonable in their promotion of the complaint the following formal provisions may apply.

Any provisions will be communicated to the complainant: -

- The complaint will be managed by one named individual at senior level who will be the only contact for the patient.
- Contact method will be advised (e.g. letter, telephone)
- There will be a time limit set for each contact
- The number of contacts within a period will be restricted.
- There will be a witness present for all face to face and telephone contacts.

- Repeated complaints from the same complainant for the same issue will be refused
- Further correspondence in respect of closed matters will only be acknowledged not responded to
- Expected standards of behaviour will be advised
- Irrelevant documentation will be returned
- Detailed records of all contact will be kept

## **FINAL RESPONSE**

If there is more than one letter required, a final response letter to the complainant will include:

- A clear statement of the issues raised, investigations undertaken and their findings.
- Where errors have occurred, these will be explained as fully as possible and any remedial action to prevent repetition will be taken.
- The response will focus on fair and proportionate outcomes for the patient
- The response will include a clear statement that the response is final.
- There will be an apology or explanation as appropriate
- A statement giving the right to escalate the complaint together with relevant contact information will be included.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY WITH OUR RESPONSE?**

We do hope that you never need to use our complaints' system, and that if you do have to use it, you get a response which you find to be satisfactory. If this is not the case, there are several other agencies who can be involved. If you are not happy with the way in which your complaint about us has been dealt with you should contact:

Customer Care Department NHS East Lancashire

31/33 Kenyon Road

Lomeshaye Estate

Nelson

BB9 5SZ

TEL:01282 610210 FAX:01282 610313

**OR**

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY SERVICE NORTH WEST(ICAS).

# PMG

PRESTIGE MEDICAL GROUP

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Dr A E Craig Dr I S Maudsley Dr L A Mervin  
Dr M E Astle Dr E R Curtis Dr D Cliff

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0845 120 3735

If you remain unhappy having tried to resolve your complaint at local level, you may contact:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman Millbank Tower Millbank London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel 0345 0154033

[www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)