

Balham Park Surgery & the Nightingale Practice Procedure for Dealing with a Complaint

Our aim is to encourage and welcome all feedback. We will always try to treat a complaint with sensitivity resolving issues as quickly as possible, assessing, acting on and sharing any learning outcomes that could prevent future occurrences.

The complaints procedure is designed to encourage patients at these practices to voice concerns, whether clinical or administrative, with the assurance that they will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. We seek to guarantee a swift response which addresses issues raised, and to demonstrate our willingness to review and change if appropriate the systems we have in place or services that we provide.

As soon as a complaint has been received, whether through the post, at reception or to any other member of staff, the complaint will be referred to the Complaints Manager.

The complainant will be encouraged to put the details in writing if the case appears to be complex, and can be given the "Tell us what you think" leaflet which states the complaints procedure if at Balham Park Surgery.

Complaints submitted verbally if resolved within 24 hours need not be recoded as a complaint but should be recorded as a concern.

The Complaints Manager will see the patient (or relative as is often the case at the Nightingale Practice) in private to discuss the details of the concern or make contact with them by telephone or letter. If it appears that there is a grievance the complainant will be assured that the matter will be taken seriously, that it will receive immediate attention and that confidentiality will be observed.

All complaints, whether verbal or written, will aim to be acknowledged orally or in writing within **three** working days. The Complaints Manager will keep a written record of the complaint, with details of all discussions, communications and action taken.

The procedure we will take is as follows;

1. Record the complaint
2. Pass to Complaints Manager
3. Undertake a Risk Assessment (See Complaints in Primary Care a Guide For General Practices Third edition March 2009)
4. Contact Defence Organisation or LMC if appropriate
5. If the Complainant is not the patient check if consent has been given
6. Consider if there are cross boundary issues

Response Times

1. Acknowledgement to complainant – within 3 days (where possible on the day of receipt)
2. Clarify any parts of the complaint that are not clear if necessary. Agree how to deal with the complaint, for example next steps, offer a meeting etc and desired outcomes.
3. Signpost the complainant to advocacy if appropriate
4. Create a plan for handling the complaint and negotiate timescales for response.
5. In the case of The Nightingale Practice, to ensure that a copy of the complaint and copy of the patients clinical record is passed to the Managing Partner at Balham Park Surgery within 15 working days of receipt. (At Balham Park Surgery we aim for a full response within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint unless otherwise discussed / agreed)
6. Complaints Manager contacts complainant to check whether resolution has been achieved.
7. Complaint Satisfaction Survey – with stamped addressed envelope is sent within 12 months of final response

Dealing with the Complaint

In the first instance it may be appropriate that the Complaints Manager expresses regret after any initial discussion for the circumstances, which have caused the person to complain, and for any distress caused. A full explanation will be provided and issues appropriately rectified. The complainant will be asked at this stage if their concerns have been satisfied or if they would like the complaint to be addressed further.

If not satisfied, the issues require liaison with others, or further investigation, the procedure for managing the complaint will be explained to the complainant.

If the complaint is clinical, the Investigating Partner, a nominated GP at the surgery will be informed.

Organisational / Administrative (Non-Clinical) Complaints

The Complaints Manager will discuss the events leading to the complaint with any members of staff concerned. If the complaint was due to a procedural problem, then this will be reviewed and a new procedure drawn up if appropriate, with training given to relevant staff.

If the complaint was due to a personnel problem then the reason will be explored and discussed with the staff involved. It may be that further training needs are raised or a change in behaviour is required. Such issues will be addressed and actions agreed individually.

We will always try to rectify any mistake as quickly as possible.

If it is unreasonable to implement changes, the complainant will be provided with an explanation as to why this is not appropriate.

Clinical Complaints

If a complaint is clinical, the Complaints Manager will if it seems appropriate, ask the complainant whether they would be happy for the clinician that was involved to contact them.

In the first instance, the Complaints Manager will approach the clinician involved and discuss the details of the complaint. Complaints can sometimes be due to a misunderstanding, or mismatch in terms of the patient / relative and clinician's expectation during a consultation. This category of complaint can often be resolved by an apology and review of need over the telephone or at the next visit. Other complaints may require an appointment or further consultation.

The Investigating Partner, a GP, is notified of clinical complaints by the Complaints Manager either during the process of resolution or afterwards. In their absence another nominated GP Partner (or the Nurse Practitioner in the Case of the Nightingale Practice) will take this role.

The Investigating Clinician will discuss any clinical concerns raised with the clinician involved in the complaint and ensure that any appropriate consultation with their medical defence association has taken place.

The Investigating Clinician will try to unpick the events leading to the complaint and ensure that any learning outcomes are shared in the same manner as non-clinical complaints.

The Complaints Manager should always be provided with a full written summary of any discussions leading to resolution.

Complaints Requiring Communication with External Organisations

Sometimes a complaint will require us to liaise with hospitals or other trusts. In such cases there may be delays in compiling / sending out a final response. If there is a delay the complainant will be informed of the realistic time frames involved.

Meeting with the Complainant

After a complaint has been investigated a meeting of everyone concerned may be called, if it is appropriate. The complainant will be informed in advance of anyone who is attending, and approval sought. They will be invited to bring someone with them if they would like to.

It is hoped that at such a meeting the complainant's concerns are answered and that they are assured that steps have been taken to avoid the event happening again.

The outcome of the procedure will be recorded and the patient will be sent a summary of the meeting promptly.

Satisfaction of Complaints Process Survey

An audit will be carried out after resolution to ensure that the complaint was dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant.

A questionnaire is sent out with a stamped addressed envelope within 12 months of receipt of any complaint. This will be returned to the Complaints Manager, reviewed then filed in the complaint documentation which is kept separate from the clinical record.

Training For Staff in Complaints Handling

We provide training to all our staff in how to deal with complaints. We share lessons learned in order to improve services in light of any issues raised through complaints, compliments or suggestions.

Monitoring Complaints

The Complaints Manager logs all compliments, suggestions and complaints in categories for annual statistical reporting to our team and NHS England. This allows us to spot trends or recurring issues.

Reporting to Our Patient Group BPSPLG (Balham Park Surgery complaints only)

The Complaints Manager gives feedback on compliments suggestions and complaints **excluding any person identifiable information**, to BPSPLG on a monthly basis. This demonstrates our commitment to transparency, openness, and allows us to gain third party reassurance that we are dealing with feedback in an appropriate manner.

Failure to Achieve Resolution – Customer Care Team Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group

Whilst we would expect to be able to manage a complaint to the satisfaction of the patient, the Patient Experience Team for Wandsworth CCG can signpost to services for an impartial conciliator at any stage of a complaint. They can advise on conciliation if required to discuss the details of the complaint with a patient and a practice in a confidential manner. They can advise on support available to attend a meeting of both parties if requested it.

In such cases it is hoped that the conciliator will facilitate improved communications and aid the resolution of complaints within practices.

Both the Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Medical Council are happy to offer help to any practices experiencing difficulty with their procedures.

Nominated Representatives for Complaints Handling

Balham Park Surgery

Complaints Manager – Natalie Whyte Managing Partner

Deputy Complaints Manager – Shelby Gibbs IT Manager (in absence of Complaints Manager)

Investigating Partner (Clinical Complaints) – Clare Macmichael, GP Partner

Deputy Investigating Partner – Dr Sangeeta Patel

Nightingale Practice

Complaints Managers – Vicki Sciberras / Joanne Greenecer– Practice Administration Leads

Deputy Complaints Manager – Ute Hamill – Nurse Practitioner

Investigating Partner (Clinical Complaints) – Dr Patrick Bower, Clinical Lead

Deputy Investigating GP – Dr Elizabeth Marston

Final Review for all Nightingale Practice Complaints: Natalie Whyte Managing Partner

Other Useful Contacts

For general questions on complaints you can contact the Customer Care Team (formerly known as PALs and Complaints) for Wandsworth CCG who will do their best to help: Email: waccg.customercare@nhs.net

Customer Care Team Wandsworth CCG

4th Floor

120 The Broadway

Wimbledon SW19 1hr

Tel: 020 8812 6600

NHS Complaints Advocacy

POhWER is a charity that helps people to be involved in decisions being made about their care.

Call POhWER's support centre on: **033 456 2370** for advice

SeAp Advocacy gives advocacy support.

Call: 0330 4409 000 for advice or text SEAP to 80800 and someone will get back to you

Unit B203, Trident Business Centre

89 Bickersteth Road

Tooting

SW17 9SH

Tel: 0300 330 5454

Email: wandsworth@voiceability.org

Website: www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org

Patients who have a comment or complaint about a GP, Pharmacy or optician which cannot be resolved locally with the manager at the practice can contact NHS England using the details below;

NHS England

PO BOX 16738

Redditch

B97 9PT

Tel: 0300 311 22 33

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

In the event of a complaint not being resolved to complainant's satisfaction they have the right to approach;

The Parliamentary Ombudsman:

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

For further comprehensive guidance on Complaints Management refer to Complaints in Primary Care a Guide For General Practices Third edition March 2009.

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Natalie Whyte

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