

# *Parkside Medical Practice–Methodology for Complaints*

Practice Manager handling complaints can be a difficult challenge. No one likes to receive a complaint but Parkside Medical Practice deals with complaints professionally, promptly and properly.

## **Confidentiality**

A complaint is confidential and should/will remain so.

## **Consent**

The person who complains must have the right to complain. The complainant of course might be the patient unless too young, too ill or too infirm. A patient with a mental incapacity might need someone else to make a complaint on their behalf. A patient who is deaf or blind may need help making a complaint. Anyone can make a complaint where a patient has died. It is clearly important to establish at the outset that a patient was registered **at the time the events took place** that are described in a complaint.

## **Appropriate Body**

Having established the right to complaint, we may need to consider whether the complaint has been lodged correctly against the Practice and one or more of its members. The complaint may refer to Hospitals or to Community Nurses and staff not employed by the Practice. If the complaint is clearly not against the Practice it should be returned to the complainant along with the name and address of the person and organisation to whom the complainant should be directed. No comment should be made on the content of the complaint.

If the complaint refers to the Practice and other health organisations and staff not employed by the Practice will forward a copy to that 'body' and we will ask for a direct reply straight to the Complainant. We will inform the complainant that you have done so and we will respond to the complaint about the Practice.

## **Bodies Responsible for Investigating Complaints**

- Medical Practice
- Out of Hours Service Provider
- Community Nursing Service Provider
- NHS Hospital Trusts
- Private Provider
- NHS England
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Public Health Provider
- A Pharmacy Provider

Patients have the right to direct their complaint to the body that commissions the service they are complaining about. This means that a complaint against a Medical Practice might land with NHS England instead of the Practice.

## **Time Limits**

Time limits are there for a purpose. Firstly the desire to make a complaint might not be immediately apparent certainly not until a sequence of events have occurred. Therefore it is reasonable to allow a period of 12 months from the event that gave rise to the complaint. Added to that memory fades and it is unreasonable to expect a photographic of events that occurred in the distant past.

## **Record Keeping**

Record keeping is a vital part of a complaints investigation. That is why it is so important to keep timely and adequate records. Emails relating to patients are also kept.

## Processing

Complaints are always be dealt with promptly. For a Practice Manager, the problem is bringing the task of responding to the top of the pile when there are so many other important and urgent tasks to deal with. A complaint is **acknowledged** either the same day or the next working day. The process should be explained to the complainant – a complaint leaflet would be also included. The response may state what date a response will be made by and if the Practice is unable to achieve that date a response date will be agreed with the complainant.

## Investigation

Depending on whom the complaint is made against a copy of the complaint should be given to those involved for their comments. This might involve a meeting with the complainant and a conversation which might explain the background to the service that was provided. Complainants always receive a full explanation of the events they complained about.

## Care use of Language

Not matter how a complaint is dealt with it is Parkside Medical Practice always commit to paper an explanation and if necessary an apology. However, this should not be done until all the evidence has been collected and if necessary professional advice has been taken. The Complainant is always be given the chance to make further comments and to ask questions if need be..

### COMPLAINTS

C – Keep complaints confidential

O – Organize the investigation in a timely manner

M- Manage the complaint – don't let it slip away from your control

P – Pass complaints on if not against practice

L – Listen carefully to complaint – it may have a point

I – Investigate carefully and thoroughly

N – Never underestimate the effect of a complaint on all parties

T- Tell patient of right of appeal

S – Say sorry responsibility has been accepted

### Responses and Rights of Appeal

The Rights of Appeal and these rights are clearly stated in the Response letter. The ultimate right of appeal is to the NHS Ombudsman. Parkside Medical Practice always will mention the right of appeal and how to appeal.