

# Bridge Surgery

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[www.bridgesurgery.net](http://www.bridgesurgery.net)



## Complaints Procedure

## MAKING A COMPLAINT

We always try to give you the best service possible, but there may be times when you feel that this has not happened. This leaflet explains what to do if you have a complaint about the services we provide for you. Our procedure is not able to deal with questions of legal liability or compensation. We hope you will use it to allow us to look into and, if necessary, put right any problems you may have identified or mistakes that have been made.

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time they arise with the person concerned and this may be the approach you try first.

Where you are not able to resolve your complaint in this way and wish to make a formal complaint you should do so, preferably in writing as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. The period for making a complaint is normally 12 months from the date the event which is the subject of the complaint occurred; or 12 months from the date the event which is the subject of the complaint comes to your notice.

If you are a registered patient you can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority. See the separate section in this leaflet.

If you wish to make a complaint, please telephone or write to our Practice Manager, Mrs Julie Finch. She will take full details of your complaint and decide how best to undertake the investigation. Please note that we have to respect our duty of confidentiality to patients and a patient's consent will be necessary if the patient themselves do not make the complaint.

The surgery staff who deal with your complaints are Dr Handley for clinical matters, or in her absence Dr Gulzar, and the Practice Manager Mrs Julie Finch for administrative matters, or in her absence Mrs Nicola Bailey, Assistant Practice Manager.

## WHAT WE DO NEXT

We think it is important to deal with complaints swiftly. We will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days, and aim to have looked into the matter within 10 working days. You may then receive a formal reply in

writing, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is likely to take longer than this we will let you know, and keep you informed as the investigation progresses.

When looking into a complaint we attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from this, and make it possible for you to discuss the issue with those involved if you would like to do so.

When the investigations are complete your complaint will be determined and a final response sent to you.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation (e.g. social services) we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one coordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. Where your complaint has been sent initially to an incorrect organisation, we may seek your consent to forward this to the correct person to deal with.

The final response letter will include details of the result of your complaint and also your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied with the response.

## COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

We keep to the strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved, we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that we can deal with someone else about it.

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply.

We may still need to correspond direct with the patient, or may be able to deal direct with the third party, and this depends on the wording of the authority provided.

## HELP MAKING A COMPLAINT

You may approach the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for help or advice. PALS is a free, informal, confidential help and advice service for patients, carers and their families. It is there to help you when you need advice, have concerns or don't know where to turn.

PALS is open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm (excluding bank holidays). There is also a 24 hour answer phone service.

Freephone: 0800 030 4563

E-mail: [feedback@staffordshirecss.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@staffordshirecss.nhs.uk)

Text: 075 406 68541

Fax: 01782 298228

If you would like help making your complaint (including help with writing your letter), you can contact the Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service. POhWER provides free, independent support for people wanting to take a complaint through the NHS complaints procedure:

Helpline: 0300 456 2370

Email: [pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)

Website: [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net)

## IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME

You have the right to approach the Health Service Ombudsman.

The contact details are:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

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