

CASTLE PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Revised October 2022

Written complaints should be addressed
in the first instance to:-

Ms Samantha Bailey
Practice Manager
Castle Practice
Carrickfergus Health Centre
Taylors Avenue
Carrickfergus
BT38 7HU

CASTLE PRACTICE DIRECT DIAL NUMBERS	
Appointments (8.30am- 10.30am)	028 9331 5805
Prescriptions (9.30am-11.30am / 2.00pm-3.30pm)	028 9331 5802
Emergencies Only/Home Visits	028 9331 5804
Results (1.30pm-3.30pm)	028 9331 5805

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 a NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

Complaints Manager
Samantha Bailey, Practice Manager/Partner

Clinical Lead Complaints
Dr Sam Hamilton, GP/Partner

How To Complain

We hope that most problems can be resolved quickly and easily, 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 and investigate. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:-

- Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem or
- Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager or any of the Doctors. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager in order to discuss your concerns. She will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

What We Shall Do

We shall acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to have looked into the complaint within 10 working days of the date when you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation or a meeting with the people involved. When we look into your complaint, 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

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. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

Helping Us To Resolve Your Complaint

We hope that if you have a problem, you will use our Practice complaints procedure. We believe that this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our Practice. You have a right to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the resolution at Practice level.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Verbal Complaint

Passed to the Practice Manager who will deal with the issues and alert the Clinical Lead if necessary.

Written Complaint

Passed to the Practice Manager who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days giving details of the way in which the complaint will be dealt with (ie, investigation, patient to be offered an appointment for discussion of the complaint or written response to the complaint).

Dalriada Urgent Care (Out Of Hours) Service Complaint

Passed to the Practice Manager who acknowledges receipt of the complaint and passes to the Clinical Lead or other GP involved for further investigation and follow up.

Complaint Regarding A Locum GP

Passed to the Practice Manager who will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days and alert the Clinical Lead. The Locum Doctor will be contacted by the Practice regarding any investigation.

Time Limits

Normally a complaint should be made within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem or within 6 months of the patient discovering the problem (as long as this is not more than 1 year after the event). However, we will extend the time limits where it would be unreasonable to expect the complaint to have been made earlier.

Resolving Complaints

Where possible, complaints will be resolved by the Practice at local level within 10 days of receipt if possible.

Copies of all contact, whether verbal or written, will be kept in our complaints file. An anonymised copy of all written complaints is sent to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.

Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health, can provide help, support and advice and can act as an 'honest broker' between the Complainant and Practitioner. Contact may be in writing to the address above or by telephoning Switchboard 0300 555 0115 or Complaints Hotline Number 028 9536 3893.

The Patient and Client Council can also offer support for complainants if required. It has offices in Ballymena, Craigavon, Omagh and its Headquarters is at 1st Floor Ormeau Baths, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS – email info.pcc@hscni.net or Freephone 0800 917 0222.

What To Do If You Are Still Not Happy With The Outcome

Most complaints are resolved at Practice level. However, if you are not happy with the response to your complaint, you can contact the Practice again and we will try to address your concerns. If you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). There is a time limit of six months following your complaint to the practice. The Ombudsman will look at your complaint and decide whether he/she should investigate it. Contact details are detailed below:-

NIPSO, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast BT1 6HN

Freephone 0800 34 24 24

Email nipso@nipso.org.uk / www.nipso.org.uk/nipso