

# **Binscombe Complaints Protocol.**

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## **Introduction and Aims.**

The Binscombe practice looks after 10,700 patients providing a full range of primary care services and over 26,000 GP appointments throughout the year. We aim to offer a highly professional compassionate and efficient service in line with our covenant however sometimes things may not go as smoothly as we would like, and patients should have a means to give feedback or make a complaint.

This protocol sets out the process by which a complaint can be made. We will listen to, act upon and learn from patient feedback.

Our specific aims are;

- all complaints should be well managed
- that the learning from complaints is identified and used for improvement
- that the complaints service is accessible, open and transparent

## **Standards**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) that inspects our handling of complaints use specific “key lines of enquiry” in their assessment. These are set out below and are the templates we use to define how well we handle complaints.

### **Key lines of Enquiry (Responsive)**

1. Do people who use the service know how to make a complaint or raise concerns, are they encouraged to do so, and are they confident to speak up?
2. How easy is the system to use? Are people treated compassionately and given the help and support they need to make a complaint?
3. Are complaints handled effectively and confidentially, with regular updates and a formal record kept?
4. Is the outcome explained appropriately to the individual? Is there openness and transparency about how complaints and concerns are dealt with?
5. How are lessons learned from concerns and complaints and is action taken as a result to improve the quality of care? Are lessons shared with others?

## **The Complaint**

Five key stages of the complaints journey can be identified, and this protocol looks at each from the perspective of the patient or service user.

### **1. Considering the complaint.**

- all staff are actively listening and seeking and acting on feedback
- information detailing the complaints procedure is readily available through a variety of sources. These include the waiting room (TV monitor and leaflets), consultation rooms & website and staff are trained to support gaining access to this information.
- practice website provides information on how to make a complaint
- staff are appropriately trained to deal with concerns immediately, and in a positive manner.
- all avenues of making a complaint are offered – via reception, email, text, phone call.

### **2. Making a complaint**

On receiving a complaint, the practice manager or her deputy will contact the patient in order to;

- ascertain the outcome that is being sought at the beginning of the complaint
- provide a named contact who will provide updates and ongoing communications throughout the complaint
- agree with the complainant as to how they wished to be addressed and contacted
- gather information or get further clarification of the complaint and discuss and agree timescales for complaint handling.
- document this information and send a copy to the patient.

### **3. Staying informed**

We will ensure;

- patients are provided with information in a way they can access (Accessible information standard) -e.g. Easy Read, or another language.
- posters and leaflets are available promoting complaints and how to make a complaint
- patients are offered support when making a complaint (including access to advocacy services)
- patients are given information to enable them to choose who they make their complaint to e.g. commissioner or provider
- patients are assured their care will not be compromised by them making a complaint.

### **4. Receiving outcomes**

With the patient's agreement a written response will be produced by the Doctor appointed to investigate the complaint. Every response should include;

- confirmation as to whether each element of the complaint has been partially or fully upheld
- details of the evidence considered and apologies as appropriate.
- details of any changes or remedies that have/will take place as a result of the complaint.
- advice on what to do if the complainant is not satisfied.

## **5. Reflecting on the experience**

- complaints are reported and discussed at practice meetings
- complaints will be reported regularly through the K041 process to the CCG and issues concerning patient safety through NRLS (DPSIMS).
- complaints are used as a learning tool at individual, team and organisation level
- complainants are asked about their experience of complaining
- the practice endeavours to publicise how we have listened and used feedback e.g. Via the website and patient participation group.

## **Training**

We expect every member of the practice staff to have working knowledge and understanding of the complaints process if asked by a patient or relative. The practice manager will supervise and audit the training programme.

Those staff handling the complaint should show evidence of suitable and regularly updated training.

## **Local Resolution Meeting (LRM)**

A complainant dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may be offered a Local resolution meeting before the case goes on to the CCG. Guidance is available for the format and process of such meetings.

## **Duty of Candour; Health and Social Care Act 2008.**

All practice staff are obligated to have a Duty of Candour as part of their NHS standard contract.

This means medical staff must be open and honest with patients (or their family) when something goes wrong, or has the potential to cause harm and distress, irrespective of whether there is a complaint, but including where this becomes apparent as a result of a complaint investigation.

## **Advocacy and Support Services.**

### **HealthWatch.co.uk**

Healthwatch.co.uk understand that you might need support to make a complaint about an NHS Service. In partnership with Surrey Independent Living Council they are able to provide free, independent support and assistance to people who live in Surrey.

<https://www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk/information-and-advice/making-a-complaint/>

Tel 0303 3030023

### **NHS Complaints Advocacy Service**

NHS Complaints Advocacy is a free, independent and confidential service available to anyone who wants support to make their complaint to the NHS.

<https://nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org>

Helpline; 0300 330 5454

### **Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA).**

Action against Medical Accidents is the UK charity for patient safety and justice. It provides free independent advice and support to people affected by medical accidents through a specialist helpline, written casework and inquest support services.

<https://www.avma.org.uk>

Helpline: 0845 123 2352