

Ballater Clinic Complaints Procedure

We make every effort to give the best service possible to everyone who attends our Practice.

However, we are aware that things can go wrong, resulting in a patient feeling that they have a genuine cause for complaint. If this is the case we would like the matter to be settled as quickly and amicably as possible.

To put in a formal complaint please email (gram.ballateradministrator@nhs.scot) or write to the Practice Manager in the first instance who will investigate further.

What is a Complaint?

Any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service by us or on our behalf.

Who can complain?

Current or former Patients, or their nominated or elected representatives (who have been given consent to act on the patients behalf). The Patient must give permission for the complaint and how much information they wish to be shared with third parties (due to confidentiality – we will ask for written consent to be completed by the Patient).

If a patient has capacity then Power of Attorney is not active and we must still have permission from the patient to pursue a complaint made on their behalf. If the Patient does not have capacity or is a child, who is not competent, then we must satisfy that the representative is acting in the Patients best interests.

Time Limits

Complaints must be made in writing within 12 months, either from the date of the incident or from when the complainant first knew about it.

Regulations state that a responsible body should only consider a complaint after this time limit if; the complainant has good reason for doing so and it is still possible to investigate the complaint fairly and effectively, despite the delay.

How to Complain

We require certain information in order to fully understand and resolve your complaint. We may ask for further information if it is not clear what outcome you wish from the complaint.

Please tell us:

Your full name, address and preferred method of contact (email or post) and the name and address of the person you are complaining on behalf of if this is different from your own information.

As much information about the complaint as you can; What has gone wrong? When did it happen? Where did it happen? How you want us to resolve the matter?

Procedure

We always try to deal with your complaint quickly however, should a detailed investigation and multiple persons be involved this can take some time. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing (email or post) within 5 working days of receiving it. We deal with complaints in two stages;

Stage One – early, local resolution

We try to resolve your complaint within 5 working days if possible. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to escalate your complaint to Stage Two.

Stage Two – investigation

We sometimes escalate to this stage if a complaint is clearly complex or needs detailed investigation. You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days informing you that there will be a Stage Two Investigation. We aim for investigations to be completed and compiled into a response for you within 20 working days. We will keep you informed if we will require more time for investigation.

If after receiving our final decision you remain dissatisfied you may contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and ask them to consider your case. We will forward their contact details in our final decision letter to you.

If we do not hear back from you within 1 month following our response to your complaint we will consider that it is resolved.

All complaints and correspondence during investigation and relating to a complaint should be made in writing to the practice. Our Reception Team are unable to discuss complaints with Patients and Representatives. We, along with the rest of the NHS, have a Zero Tolerance to verbal and physical abuse of our staff.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.

All Partners will be made aware of complaints and these will be discussed as a Team.

We keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to the complaints. These are stored securely outside of the patient record as per guidance from the Medical and Dental Defence Union for Scotland.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the option of contacting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than 12 months ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

The SPSO's contact details are:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House,
99 McDonald Road,
Edinburgh EH7 4NS

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Please note that a freepost envelope can be supplied by calling the Freephone number or using the online contact form.