



# Complaints Procedure

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## Introduction

We always try to give you the best service possible, but there may be times when you feel this has not happened. This policy explains what to do if you have a complaint about the services we provide.

We hope you will use this procedure to allow us to look into and, if necessary, put right any problems you have identified or mistakes that have been made. Our practice procedure is not able to deal with questions of legal liability or compensation.

If you use this procedure it will not affect your right to complain to the Patient Liaison Service (PALS) if you so wish. The contact address for the PALS is printed at the bottom of this page. Please note that we have to respect our duty of confidentiality to patients. A patient's consent will be necessary if that patient in person does not make the complaint.

## Who to Contact

If you have any concerns or wish to make a complaint, please contact the Complaints Manager in writing or by email:

Complaints Manager  
The Swan Practice  
Masonic House  
26 High Street  
Buckingham  
Bucks  
MK18 1NU

Email: [admin.theswanpractice@nhs.net](mailto:admin.theswanpractice@nhs.net)  
Marking it for the attention of The Complaints Manager

## Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should preferably be made as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us establish what happened more easily. In any event, this should be:

Within 12 months of the incident,

Or within 12 months of you discovering the incident and giving as much detail as you can

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 procedure.

We are able to provide you with a separate complaints form to register your complaint and this includes a third-party authority form to enable a complaint to be made by someone else. Please ask the receptionist for this. You can provide this in your own format providing this covers all the necessary aspects.

All complaints will be investigated fully.

## Complaints Investigation

We look to settle complaints as soon as possible.

We will acknowledge receipt within 7 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 make an appointment to discuss the matter further. This would be a mutually convenient time to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue. Should you wish to, you are entitled to bring a friend or relative to the meeting. We will try to address your concerns fully, provide you with an explanation and discuss any action that may be needed. We hope that at the end of the meeting you will feel satisfied that we have dealt with the matter thoroughly.

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 we will contact you and a final response sent to you.

Where your complaint involved 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.

Please ask at reception for the complaints form.

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 directly with the patient, or we may be able to deal direct with the third party, this depends on the wording of the authority provided.

## Further Information

We hope that if you have a problem you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. If you prefer to raise your complaint independently you may also approach The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

PALS provide confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available from the NHS.

You can contact them on [pals@buckshealthcare.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@buckshealthcare.nhs.uk) or 0800 328 5640

If you feel that we have not been able to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you have the right to take the matter to the Health Service Ombudsman for England:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1 4QP

Tel: 0345 0154033

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

## ADVOCACY SUPPORT

If a patient requires advocacy support in raising concerns, please contact SEAP, who provide NHS Complaints Advocacy Services in Thames Valley.

Tel: 0330 440 9000

[www.seap.org.uk](http://www.seap.org.uk) for further information.

## **NHS ENGLAND COMPLAINTS**

If patients wish to inform NHS England of their concerns, or in the event of having a complaint about multiple providers, they may contact the NHS England Contact Centre on 0300 311 22 33  
Email: [England.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:England.contactus@nhs.net) or write to NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT.