



Birtley Medical Group Complaints Procedure

If you're not happy with the care or treatment you've received you have the right to complain, have your complaint investigated, and be given a full and prompt reply. Most issues can be resolved informally. We would suggest you first try to have a discussion with your doctor or a member of staff. A formal complaint takes time and minor issues are often resolved quicker if you can speak to someone.

NHS England calls this informal process 'local resolution' and urges everyone to see if things can be solved there and then before they escalate to a real problem. However, if despite everything this doesn't solve your problem, or even if it does but you would still like to make a formal complaint, you can follow the NHS complaints procedure as described below.

The NHS Complaints Process

Stage one: Making a complaint

If you don't feel like you can solve issues informally then you can make a formal complaint to the Practice. We aim to acknowledge complaints within 3 working days. If you cannot make a complaint yourself, then you can ask someone else to do it for you. You can also contact North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA), should you need assistance with making a complaint. They can be contacted on 0808 802 3000 or by email at ica@carersfederation.co.uk

The Practice Manager and the Clinical Governance Lead GP meet every week to look at any complaints received and to discuss any actions necessary. At this stage we may write to the complainant advising of actions taken or a meeting may be offered to discuss the complaint in more detail.

The doctor may need to review the notes, reflect on the case, and sometimes request advice from a professional body. Occasionally it may be necessary to gain information from other sources, for example, hospital letters. Once all the information is available the case is then discussed again with the Clinical Lead GP who then writes to the complainant stating the findings, offering apologies on behalf of the Practice or staff where appropriate, and offering a meeting with the complainant. Where it is clear something should be done differently in future or where there is a useful learning point, these are further discussed in Significant Event meetings held at the Practice.

However, if you feel too uncomfortable to complain to the Practice directly then you can make a complaint to the commissioner of the services instead. Such complaints should be directed to:

NHS England
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT

Or by email to: england.contactus@nhs.net

Please ensure you state 'For the attention of the complaints manager' in the subject line.

Please Note: if you have already complained to the Practice then NHS England will not be able to reinvestigate the same concerns. In this case you should proceed to stage two of the complaints process.

Stage two: I am not happy with the outcome of my complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who is independent of the NHS and government. Complaints should be addressed to

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 0345 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

When should I complain?

As soon as possible. Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the date of the event that you're complaining about, or as soon as the matter first came to your attention.