

Now Pharmacy, Unit 15 & 16, Mill Lane Trade Park, Liverpool, L13 4BF

Pharmacy comments, suggestions and complaints procedure

Objectives

This pharmacy has a positive attitude to receiving comments, suggestions or complaints from people. We wish to offer people an explanation for any concern they have and use feedback constructively to improve the services provided by the pharmacy. The pharmacy complaints and comments procedure aims to:

- Provide the fullest possible opportunity for investigation and resolution of a complaint, that satisfies the person while being scrupulously fair to staff;
- Ensure prompt response and quick resolution of complaints;
- Focus on making improvements in service delivery in response to suggestions, compliments and complaints rather than apportioning blame among staff;
- Ensure that patients are aware of how to make a suggestion or complain or pass on a compliment; and
- Encourage staff and pharmacists to listen and talk with those who have a complaint or compliment.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff and pharmacists will be prepared to receive complaints and comments from patients and customers and to assist with investigating complaints. In addition the pharmacy owner has designated Janet Smith as the Complaints Manager, who has overall responsibility for ensuring that complaints are handled appropriately.

Informing patients how to complain

The pharmacy will inform patients how to complain through:

- a note in the practice leaflet;
- a poster displayed in the pharmacy; and
- a 'Suggestions, comments and complaints form available within the pharmacy.
- Our website

If asked, staff will explain how suggestions, comments and complaints may be made.

Patient's representatives

A complaint may be made by a patient or any person who is affected by or likely to be affected by the action, omission or decision of the pharmacy.

A representative can make the complaint where the above person has died; is a child; is unable by reason of physical or mental incapacity to make the complaint himself; or has requested the representative to act on his behalf.

We must be sure, when discussing a patient's treatment with a third party, that the person is authorised to speak on behalf of the patient, so that we do not breach

confidentiality. Generally, therefore, we will require evidence of the consent of the patient, unless circumstances are such that the patient cannot give consent (such as a young child, or a person who does not have the mental capacity to give consent).

Where the complaint is made on behalf of a child, the NHS requires the complaints manager to be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the complaint being made by the representative instead of the child. The complaints manager also needs to be satisfied that the representative is conducting the complaint in the best interests of the child. If the complaints manager does not believe there are reasonable grounds for the representative making the complaint, or is not conducting the complaint in the best interests of the child, the representative will be notified in writing, with the reasons why the complaints manager will not consider the complaint made via the representative.

Where the complaint is made on behalf of a person who is unable to make the complaint because of a lack of mental capacity, the NHS requires the complaints manager to be satisfied that the representative is conducting the complaint in the best interests of the person on whose behalf the complaint is made. If the complaints manager does not believe the representative is conducting the complaint in the best interests of the person on whose behalf the complaint is made, the representative will be notified in writing, with the reasons why the complaints manager will not consider the complaint made via the representative.

Immediate health needs

In all cases we will first try and ensure that the patients immediate health needs are being met if necessary taking urgent action before any matters relating to the complaint are tackled.

Confidentiality

Complainants will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. The pharmacy will only discuss confidential information to the extent it is necessary in order to answer the complaint.

Timescale for resolving a complaint

The complaints manager will in normal circumstances discuss with the complainant the manner of handling the complaint and the response period to respond to a complaint. If the complainant does not wish to discuss the manner of handling and response period, the complaints manager will write to inform the complainant of the response period.

Receiving a verbal complaint

Staff will listen to the patients concerns and if they are able, resolve them immediately. Staff will seek to understand the nature of the complaint and any aspects that are not immediately obvious. Complainants will be encouraged to speak openly and freely about their concerns. Staff will listen and accept the complaint.

If an oral complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant not later than the working day after receiving the complaint, the formal (i.e. written) complaints procedure below will not be used. If, however, the complainant wishes the complaint to be dealt with under the formal procedures, the complaint may be made orally, in writing or electronically.

Staff will pass the complaint to the pharmacy complaints manager to deal with as soon as practicable.

Receiving letters of complaint

These will be passed to the pharmacy complaints manager. If the complainant is not the patient, the pharmacy complaints manager will consider whether it is appropriate to require the consent of the patient in order to investigate the complaint.

Acknowledging a complaint

When a complaint is received orally or in writing, the complaints manager will send an acknowledgement within two working days. The complainant will be asked if they wish to discuss the manner of handling the complaint and the response period for dealing with the complaint.

Investigating a complaint

The complaints manager will oversee the investigation of a complaint. The complaints manager will make all necessary inquiries such as interviews with the complainant, pharmacists and members of staff. The complaints manager will keep notes of all these interviews. If the pharmacy needs to invite the complainant in to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation they will be invited to bring a relative, friend or someone from the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), if they want to.

Resolving a complaint

At the end of the investigation the pharmacy owner will write to the complainant providing a report which includes the following matters—

- an explanation of how the complaint has been considered; and
- the conclusions reached in relation to the complaint including any matters for which the complainant or pharmacy contractor considers remedial action is needed; and
- confirmation as to whether the pharmacy owner is satisfied that any action needed in consequence of the complaint has been taken or is proposed to be taken;
- details of the complainant's right to take their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman.

Recording

The pharmacy will keep a file of remarks made, forms, investigation notes, letters, action taken etc.

Time limits for the pharmacy accepting complaints

The pharmacy will investigate complaints made within 12 months of the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint occurred, or within 12 months of the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint came to the notice of the complainant. In the event of a complaint being received 'out of time' the complaints manager will decide whether it is still possible to investigate thoroughly. If the decision is made that a complaint will not be investigated because it is out of time the complaints manager will write to the complainant informing them of this and explaining why the decision has been made.

Complaints about the pharmacy and another NHS body

The pharmacy will seek to investigate and resolve these complaints in conjunction with the other body. The pharmacy will get the complainant's permission to liaise with the other body before proceeding. If the complaint is solely about another body, the pharmacy will get the complainant's permission to pass the complaint on to that body.

Complaints and discipline

The complaints procedure is about giving explanations and making improvements. If as a result of a complaint it is necessary to discipline a member of staff, the disciplinary procedure will be used.

Monitoring complaints

The complaints manager and the pharmacy owner will be responsible for ensuring the pharmacy makes constructive use of feedback from complaints. The pharmacy will keep a log of complaints and make use of feedback from comments and complaints to improve services.

Annual Report

Each year we will prepare an annual report for the year ending 31 March. This will

- specify the number of complaints received;
- specify the number of complaints which we decided were well-founded;
- specify the number of complaints which we have been informed have been referred to the Health Service Commissioner to consider; and
- include a summary of —
 - the subject matter of complaints received;
 - any matters of general importance arising out of those complaints, or the way in which the complaints were handled;
 - any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints.

The annual report is available to any person on request. We also send a copy of the annual report to the local NHS England Area Team.

Conclusion

As a pharmacy we will encourage Suggestions, comments and complaints from all of our patients and customers, so we can continually improve the services we offer. Complaints must be looked upon as an opportunity for improving our services and ultimately securing the future of our business. Complaints will be dealt with in a non-confrontational manner and we should not feel threatened by them. All complaints will be dealt with in a manner that maintains confidentiality for those involved. Only those people within the pharmacy, who need to know, will learn of the complaint.

Our aim is to give our customers the highest possible standards of service and we aim to deal swiftly with any problems that may occur