

HILLHEAD FAMILY PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2026

Dr A Thompson / Dr E Fitzsimons / Dr Paul Carlisle / Dr Conor McCrory / Dr Rachel Finch

We always try to offer you the best services possible, but there may be times when you feel that this has not happened. If something has gone wrong or fallen below standard, we welcome the opportunity to improve and avoid a recurrence.

If you are unhappy with something, you can speak to anyone who is dealing with your treatment or care and they will try to resolve the problem straight away.

We would hope to resolve any problems you may have as early as possible by offering you an appropriate explanation and apology. The Practice Manager is the practice designated complaints manager.

HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Complaints may be made either verbally or in writing to any member of staff or doctor. This can be done by:

- ☐ Speaking in person
- ☐ Telephoning the surgery on 028 9028 6800
- ☐ Writing, giving full details of the complaint to David Fowler (Practice Manager).

If you wish to make a complaint we would ask you to let us know as soon as possible after the event; but normally within six months. Please include contact details, who or what is being complained about, where and when the events of the complaint happened and where possible what you would like us to do – offer an apology, or an explanation or make changes to services.

We have a duty of confidentiality to all patients. Complaints from a third party should, where possible, have the written consent of the individual concerned.

If you do not feel able to approach someone in the practice, you may contact the Complaints Department of the Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG), formerly the Health and Social Care Board for further help and support.

HOW IS MY COMPLAINT DEALT WITH?

We think it is important to deal quickly, thoroughly, openly, honestly and objectively with any complaints received. The practice will aim to address your concerns fully, provide you with an explanation and discuss any action that may be needed.

If we are unable to investigate your complaint, we will tell you why and signpost you to the most appropriate organisation to assist you.

This is the procedure that we follow consists of 2 stages:

Stage 1 -

We will try and address your concerns immediately and provide you with an explanation and/or the action taken to resolve the problem.

If the issue raised requires further investigation, we aim to complete this and notify you within 5 working days (which can be extended by a further 5 working days if required).

If the complaint is complex and requires more time to investigate or remains unresolved, we will proceed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

Stage 2 -

1. Formal acknowledgement of your complaint (normally by letter) within three working days of being received by the Practice.
2. To fully investigate a complaint, it may be necessary to arrange a meeting with the Patient/ their representative. If this is required, it will be arranged as soon as possible.
3. A full written response to the outcome of the complaint investigation will be forwarded to you within 20 working days. This timeframe may be extended if required and we will keep you updated with the progress of the investigation and expected date of completion.
4. We hope that the complaint can be resolved at this stage, however, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome following completion of our process, you may refer the complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO); normally within 6 months from the date of completion of the complaints process.
5. Following completion of the process; should the Practice systems require change, they will be discussed with staff with a view to implementing change as soon as possible.

We cannot deal with questions of legal liability or compensation but we hope we can look into and, put right any problem you experience.

The practice will retain a record of all complaints and will report complaint information to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) or the Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman (NIPSO), as required.

WHO ELSE CAN I CONTACT?

Strategic Performance & Planning Group (SPPG)

Complaints Office

12–22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

BT2 8BS

Tel.:028 9536 3893

<https://online.hscni.net/fps-complaints/>

The SPPG can act as an “honest broker” who mediate between the Patient and the Surgery to help resolve complaints. Both parties must agree to the SPPG acting in this function.

Patient Client Council

5th Floor

14-16 Great Victoria Street, Belfast

BT2 7BA

Freephone 0800 917 0222

<http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/>

The council works on behalf of patients in all areas of health and social care.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington Place, Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freephone 0800 34 34 24

<http://www.nipso.org.uk>

Please note; complaints should normally be forwarded to the Ombudsman within 6 months of the completion of our internal complaints process.