

Complaints in Health and Social Care Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning

Attention all family practitioner services

Complaints in Health and Social Care: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning (1 April 2009) has replaced the *HPSS Complaints Procedure (1996)*. It provides a streamlined process that applies equally to all health and social care (HSC) organisations including family practitioner services.

The HSC standards for complaints handling are:-

Accountability - HSC organisations will ensure that there are clear lines of accountability for the handling and consideration of complaints.

Accessibility - All service users will have open and easy access to the HSC Complaints Procedure and the information required to enable them to complain about any aspect of service.

Receiving complaints - All complaints received will be dealt with appropriately and the process and options for pursuing a complaint will be explained to the complainant.

Supporting complainants and staff - HSC organisations will support complainants and staff throughout the complaints process.

Investigation of complaints - All investigations will be conducted promptly, thoroughly, openly, honestly and objectively.

Responding to complaints - All complaints will be responded to as promptly as possible and all issues raised will be addressed.

Monitoring - HSC organisations will monitor the effectiveness of complaints handling and responsiveness.

Learning - HSC organisations will promote a culture of learning from complaints so that where necessary, services can be improved when complaints are raised.

Practice-based Complaints Procedure

The standards require all family practitioner services to have in place a practice-based complaints procedure for the handling of complaints. FPS should note that posters should be displayed within the practice, highlighting the various mechanisms of how to raise a complaint. This practice-based complaints procedure is the local resolution mechanism for resolving complaints at practice level.

The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) Complaints Department can provide you with help, support and advice.

If you need help in any of the following areas:

- The role of the HSCB acting as “honest broker” between the complainant and practitioner.
- Appointment of independent experts, independent laypersons or conciliators.
- Practice based complaints procedures, leaflets etc.
- Complaints Handling.

We can arrange a visit to your Practice or you can contact us by phone or email:

HSCB Complaints Department,
12-22 Linenhall Street,
Belfast BT2 8BS
Tel: 028 95363893

A copy of *Complaints in Health and Social Care: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning* is available on the DoH website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-complaints-standards-and-guidelines>