

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RAISING A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT WITH THE PRACTICE

We as a practice aim to provide the highest standard of care for our patients. We want all of our patients to be happy with the service they receive. We do understand that on occasion a patient may feel the need to raise their concerns with the practice and we want them to be able to discuss any concerns they have with our team. We take all concerns and complaints raised very seriously. We hope that any concerns raised can be dealt swiftly and at the time they arise. If your concerns cannot be resolved in this way and you wish to make a complaint then please let us know as soon as possible. We will aim to deal with a complaint in a sensitive and open manner and we will treat patients politely and with respect. Our aim is to deal with our patient's complaint as we would want our own complaint dealt with about a service. We will use any complaints as a way to learn from our mistakes and to improve our service. With this in mind this is our code of practice for Patient Complaints and Concerns and what we aim to achieve is:

- To provide a consistent approach.
- To deal with a complaint efficiently and openly.
- To investigate complaints and concerns properly by having a practice procedure, following current national and professional guidelines and by continually updating this policy.
- We will keep you informed throughout the process.
- We will treat all patients with respect and courtesy throughout the process.
- We will try and deal with any complaint and concern promptly and resolve the matter as quickly as possible following our procedure, and wherever possible, to the satisfaction of the patient.
- We will ensure our staff are adequately trained in these procedures so that they can effectively deal with any concerns or complaints.
- We will ensure that we learn from complaints and continuously improve our service.

PROCEDURE FOR INFORMING THE PRACTICE OF A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

1. The Person responsible for dealing with any concerns or complaints is the Practice Manager – Rachel Gidney. In her absence then a complaint may be referred to the Practice Principle – Dr Russell Gidney.
2. If a complaint is made in person or by telephone, the member of staff receiving the complaint will listen to you and assist you straight away if they are able. They will make an initial record of the concerns and check for accuracy with the patient. A copy of this along with this code will then be given to the patient. If it can't be dealt with by them then they will offer the opportunity for you to speak to the Practice Manager immediately. If the Practice Manager is not available at the time, then the patient will be informed when they will be able to talk to the Practice Manager and arrangements will be made for this to happen. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period of time or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.
3. If the patient complains in writing, by fax or by email, the complaint will be passed immediately to the Practice Manager.

4. Complaints about clinical care or associated charges will be referred to the clinician concerned, unless the patient requests otherwise.
5. If we are able to resolve a complaint the same day then these regulations will not apply.
6. A patient raising a concern is entitled to have someone act upon their behalf (a Representative) if the patient has died, is a child (someone who has not reached the age of eighteen years of age), or they are unable to notify the concerns themselves because of lack of capacity or the patient has given consent and has requested a representative to act on their behalf. Please note we have strict rules of confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we may have to know that you have their permission to do so. We can provide a form of consent for the person concerned to sign giving permission, unless they are not able to do so.
7. In the case of a representative acting on behalf of a child or young person, the practice has to satisfy itself that that the child or young person is happy for the person raising the concern to represent them. A child or young person has the right to raise a concern themselves with support and assistance if needed. The practice can provide information for the assistance available. If we have any concerns about a representative we will notify the representative in writing and state the reason for any decisions about representation. It may mean we are entitled not to consider that concern.
8. All complaints and concerns are acknowledged in writing as soon as possible but within **two working days** of being received. A copy of this code will be sent with the acknowledgement. If the patient has not yet discussed the matter with the Practice Manager they will be offered the opportunity to do so and they will be asked how they would like to be kept informed of developments – by letter, email, and telephone or face-to-face meetings. The patient will also be advised of the process that will be followed in resolving the complaint or concerns and the anticipated time scale.
9. We will investigate the complaint/concern speedily and efficiently and as far as reasonably practicable; we will keep the patient informed of our progress. Investigations will normally be completed and a full response provided as soon as reasonably practicable but within **30 working days** from receipt of the complaint/concern. If we are unable to do so within this timescale then we will contact you immediately and explain the reason, we will keep you informed and respond to your concern as soon as is reasonable practicable or within 6 months of being notified of the concern.
10. In investigating the complaint we shall aim to:
 - Find out what happened and where appropriate what went wrong.
 - If appropriate make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned
 - If appropriate identify what we can do to ensure the problem doesn't arise again
 - We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
11. On completion of our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which will include:
 - An explanation of how the concern/complaint was considered.
 - The conclusions reached in respect to each specific part of the concern/complaint.
 - Details of any necessary remedial action and

- Whether the practice is satisfied with any action it has already taken or will be taking as a result of the complaint.
12. Proper and comprehensive records will be kept of any complaint/concern received as well as actions taken to improve services as a consequence of the complaint.
 13. A concern should be notified within 12 months from when the concerns occurred or from when a patient realised there was a concern. It may be possible to investigate a concern after this deadline if there is a good reason why it hasn't been notified previously. Usually up to a maximum of 3 years after the concern is recognised.
 14. A concern can be withdrawn at any time by the person who notified us of the concern. This will then be confirmed in writing by the practice.
 15. We hope that if you have a problem you will use the practice complaints procedure. We believe it will give us the best chance to resolve any concerns and is an opportunity to learn and improve our service. If a patient is not satisfied with the outcome from their complaint, then the complaint may be referred to:

FOR NHS PATIENTS:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,
Pencoed,
CF35 5LJ
Tel: 0300 790 0203
Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
Website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

FOR PRIVATE PATIENTS:

Dental Complaints Service,
Stephenson House
2 Cherry Orchard Road
Croydon CR0 6BA
Telephone: 020 8253 0800 at local rate
Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk

16. If a patient requires help with raising their concerns then information, support and guidance can be provided by your local community health council (CHC). You can contact your local CHC at the following address:

Catherine O'Sullivan
Chief Officer,
Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council,
Raglan House
6-8 William Brown Close,
Llantarnam Business Park,
Cwmbran,
NP44 3AB.

Tel : 01633 838516

Email: abchc@abchc.org.uk

Or website www.communityhealthcouncils.org.uk

Tel: 0845 644 7814/02920 235558

Email: enquiries@waleschc.org.uk

17. Other useful contact information

If a patient feels they cannot raise a concern directly with the practice then they can raise it with the Local Health Board, please see contact details below:

Judith Paget,
Chief Executive,
Aneurin Bevan Health Board,
St Cadocs Hospital,
Lodge Road,
Caerleon,
Newport,
NP8 3XQ
Puttingthingsright.ABHB@wales.nhs.uk
Aneurin Bevan Contact Centre: 01495 745656

General Dental Council,
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Tel: 0207 167 6000
Website: www.gdc-uk.org

The Healthcare Inspectorate Wales is responsible for regulating healthcare in Wales, please see contact details below:

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
Welsh Government
Rhydycar Business Park
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ
Phone: 0300 062 8163
E- mail: hiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.hiw.org.uk

For our Denplan patients:

Denplan Ltd,
Denplan Court,
Victoria Road,
Winchester,
Hampshire,
SO23 7RG
Tel: 01962 828 000 Website: www.denplan.co.uk