

How to, express a concern, send a compliment or make a complaint

Garswood Surgery welcomes concerns, compliments and complaints as valuable feedback that can help us learn from experiences and make improvements to services we commission.

The Friends & Family Test

A good way to send us feedback is to complete the Friends & Family Test (F&FT) questionnaire which is accessible from our website www.garswoodsurgery.co.uk. Paper copies of the questionnaire are available in the surgery waiting room and at reception. The questionnaire is anonymous and is designed to be simple and quick to complete. We appreciate the time taken to complete a F&FT questionnaire as it provides us with valuable feedback – both good and bad - about the service we provide. Your patient group consider the feedback we receive via the F&FT and we discuss recurring issues and consider ways to shape services to be responsive to the needs and wants of our patients as far as is reasonable and practical.

All NHS providers have their own versions of the F&FT.

You can also leave feedback on NHS Choices where your comments would be in the public domain. The provider has the right to respond to feedback.

Sometimes you may feel a service you have received has fallen short of your expectations and want to share your concerns with the provider of that service.

If you are dissatisfied with a service you have received from us please let us know. Most issues can be resolved without you having to make a formal complaint. Try having an informal chat with your doctor or a member of staff first. A formal complaint takes time and minor issues are resolved quicker if you just speak to us. We will listen to your concerns and try to arrive at a mutually satisfactory resolution within 24 hours. NHS England calls this informal process 'local resolution' and urges everyone to see if things can be resolved there and then before they escalate to a real problem

What if I want to complain?

The NHS is made up from numerous different organisations, eg;

- GP Practices (Primary Care)
- Hospitals (Secondary Care)
- Out of Hours services
- Community Services (eg, District Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitors, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Counseling, etc)
- Community Pharmacists
- Opticians
- Dentists

Who should I complain to?

It is important to try to ensure that you direct your complaint to the correct organisation so that your concerns can be investigated properly, however, if you do direct it to the wrong organisation it would, with your permission, be forwarded it to the right one.

Who can complain?

Usually you should make the complaint yourself but you can ask someone else to make your complaint with your permission.

When should I complain?

You should make your complaint as soon as possible. The NHS complaint procedure states that you should make your complaint within 12 months of either the event you are complaining about or as soon as the matter came to your attention. This time limit can be extended as long as the complaint can still be satisfactorily investigated.

Can I get help to make my complaint?

If you would like support in making your complaint the practice manager can assist you to compose a written statement. Alternatively, you can ask a Healthwatch representative or you could use the NHS Advocacy which is a free, confidential service provided by the local authority and which is totally independent of the NHS.

How long will it take?

This will depend on what your complaint is about and how complex it is. The NHS complaints regulations do not require complaints to be investigated within a set timescale. The service provider will agree an individual timescale with you.

The complaints procedure

Garswood Surgery's complaints policy is based on the NHS Complaint's procedure. It is designed to be as patient focused as possible and investigate complaints effectively and efficiently.

It is a two stage process; the first stage is called **Local Resolution**.

Local resolution

What you need to provide

Provide as much information as possible to allow us to investigate your complaint. Include some or all of the following:

- your name and contact details;
- a clear description of your complaint and any relevant times and dates
- details of any relevant healthcare providers or services
- any relevant correspondence

What do we do next?

Acknowledge receipt of the complaint

We aim to acknowledge all complaints no later than the third working day after the day the complaint is received.

Investigate the complaint.

The complaint will be investigated and you will receive the findings of that investigation along with an appropriate apology and the changes or learning that have taken place as a result of the investigation.

If a complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction through initial local resolution, you would be invited to contact the Practice manager to request further clarification and/or appropriate further action to achieve resolution.

The Practice manager will consider all aspects of the complaint and the needs of the complainant and staff concerned and may involve the provision of further oral or written clarification and/or the offer of a face-to-face meeting. In certain cases the Practice manager will offer the services of an independent clinical adviser and/or the lay Conciliator.

Second stage of the complaints process

If after attempts at local resolution you remain dissatisfied with our reply, the next step would be to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to review your complaint and how it has been handled.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 0345 015 4033 Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

The PHSO undertakes independent investigations into complaints alleging that government departments and other public bodies in the UK, including NHS England, have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (or Health Service Commissioner for England) has the same powers as a court of law. NHS England therefore has a legal duty to co-operate fully with any inquiry or investigation that the PHSO carries out in relation to a complaint and to provide any relevant documents.

Include the following in your complaint:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- Name and contact details of anyone helping you with the complaint
- Name and contact details of the health provider you wish to complain about
- The factual details of your complaint (listing the main events and when they happened)
- Why you think your previous complaint wasn't resolved to your satisfaction, and how this has caused you injustice
- Details of the complaints you've already made to the healthcare provider and the outcome of their investigations
- Copies of any relevant documents (it's usually helpful to number these and provide a list)

Keep copies of everything you post and make a note of when you send it. You can obtain a certificate of posting from the post office.

If you are unhappy with the Ombudsman's decision, you can appeal directly to the PHSO. Details of how to do this can be found on the PHSO's website:

<http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint/feedback-about-us>

Once the Ombudsman or one of their senior staff has considered the complaint and sent a response, their decision is final. They will acknowledge any further correspondence but unless you raise new issues that they consider significant, they will not send further replies.