

# Pinfold Medical Practice

## Complaints Policy



Date Approved: 23.03.2025

Review Date: March 2027 or sooner in case of NHS regulation updates

**Complaints Lead: Anne M Palmer**

### **Clinical Complaints**

Complaints relating to clinical care will be reviewed directly by one of our GP Partners:

- Dr Israr Ahmed
- Dr Nasir Asghar

Introduction:

Pinfold Medical is committed to providing safe, high-quality, patient-centred care. If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, we want to hear from you so we can learn, improve, and resolve concerns fairly. This policy follows the NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 and the NHS Complaints Procedure.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the service or care provided by Pinfold Medical.

- The practice will take all reasonable steps to ensure that patients are aware of:
  - The Complaints and Comments Procedure
  - The roles of the practice; NHS England; and the Health Service Ombudsman with regard to patient complaints.

This includes the alternative facility for the patient to complain directly to Walsall ICB instead of making their complaint to the practice, as well as their right to escalate their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman when they are dissatisfied with the initial response.

**N.B. ALL escalations must be directed to the Health Service Ombudsman (so when a patient is dissatisfied with the practice's response to their complaint, they must escalate their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman, NOT to NHS England.**

- Their right to assistance with any complaint from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS); The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS); Citizens Advice Bureau, NHS Direct and the Care Quality Commission

- The practice Complaints and Comments Patient Information Leaflet, the practice Patient Information Leaflet / Booklet and the practice website will be the prime information sources for implementing this policy. These will be kept up to date and be made freely available to all patients.
- All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Patients who make a complaint will not be discriminated against or be subject to any negative effect on their care, treatment or support.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints are handled according to Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

### **How to Make a Complaint**

**Complaints may be made verbally, in writing or using our concern/feedback link.**

**Contact: Anne M Palmer – Practice Manager & Complaints Lead.**

**Tel:** 01922 775 135

**Post:** Pinfold Medical, Pinfold Health Centre, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS3 3JP

Ask a member of the team to send the concern/feedback link direct to your phone

While the practice manager will make every effort to speak to you as soon as your issue arises this may not always be possible and in such case arrangements will be made for her to call you back or for you to come in and meet in person.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Complaint initiated on Practice Premises

- In the event that a practice staff member notices that a patient appears to be distressed / upset on the practice premises, they should immediately contact the Practice Manager, who will attempt to identify and resolve the problem personally at that time.
- In the event of a practice staff member being advised that a patient wishes to make a complaint, the patient should be provided a copy of the current practice Complaints and Comments Patient Information Leaflet.
- The patient should be advised of the modes of making a complaint: verbally, in writing or using our concern/feedback link
- Whichever option is chosen, the patient should be assured that their complaint will be acknowledged within three working days from receipt of the form.

### **Receipt and acknowledgement of complaints**

The practice may receive the following complaints:

- A complaint made directly by the patient or former patient, who is receiving or has received treatment at the practice;
- A complaint made on behalf of a patient or former patient (with his/her consent), who is receiving or has received treatment at the practice;

- Where the patient is a child:
  - By either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child;
  - By a person duly authorised by a Local Authority into whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989;
  - By a person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation, by which the child is being accommodated.
- Where the patient is incapable of making a complaint, by a representative who has an interest in his/her welfare.
- All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt.
- If the practice identifies that the complaint will involve an additional provider, it will agree with that provider which organisation will take the lead in responding and communicating with the complainant.

### **Timeframe for Making a Complaint**

Complaints should be made within 12 months of the event or becoming aware of the issue. We may investigate outside this timeframe when possible.

### **Handling of Complaints**

#### **Acknowledgement**

- We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days.
- This written acknowledgement should include:
- The name of the practice member of staff who will be investigating the complaint
  - An offer to meet with the complainant, at a time and location convenient to them, to discuss the manner in which the complaint is to be handled, the response period within which the investigation of the complaint is likely to be completed, and when the full response is likely to be sent to the complainant.
  - As much of the following information as possible will be obtained at this initial meeting, to enable the concerns to be assessed correctly, resolved quickly if possible and build a good ongoing relationship with them:
    - Ascertain they would like to be addressed – as Mr, Mrs, Ms or by their first name.
    - Ascertain how they wish to be kept informed about how their complaint is being dealt with – by phone, letter, email or through a third party such as an advocacy or support service.
      - If they choose to be kept informed by phone, ascertain the times when it is convenient to call and verify that they are happy for messages to be left on their answerphone.

If they choose to be kept informed by post, make sure that they are happy to receive correspondence at the address given

- Systematically go through the reasons for the complaint so that there is a clear understanding why they are dissatisfied.

- Ascertain what they would like to happen as a result of the complaint (for example, an apology, new appointment, reimbursement for costs or loss of personal belongings or an explanation).
- Advise them at the outset if their expectations are not feasible or realistic.
- Formulate and agree a plan of action, including when and how the complainant will hear back from the practice.

If it is considered that the matter can be resolved quickly without further investigation, the practice will do so, providing the complainant agrees and there is no risk to other service users.

In the event the complainant does not accept the offer of a discussion, the practice will itself determine the response period and notify the complainant in writing of that period.

### **Investigation**

A full and fair investigation will be completed. After the investigation is completed, the practice will compile a written response which incorporates:

- A summary of each element of the complaint
- Details of policies or guidelines followed
- A summary of the investigation
- Details of key issues or facts identified by an investigation
- Conclusions of the investigation: was there an error, omission or shortfall by your organisation? Did this disadvantage the complainant, and if so, how?
- What needs to be done to put things right?
- An apology, if one is needed
- An explanation of what will happen next (e.g. what will be done, who will do it, and when)

Information on what the person complaining should do if they are still unhappy and wish to escalate the complaint, including full contact information on the Health Service Ombudsman.

### **Response Times**

We aim to provide a full written response within 30 working days unless otherwise agreed. If we cannot complete an investigation and provide a response within 30 working days the patient should be notified as soon as possible and given details on the updated timeframe for response.

### **Complaining to the Commissioner:**

If a patient does not wish to complain directly to the practice they should contact the commissioning team in the first instance.

**Pinfold Medical Commissioning Team are:**

**Walsall ICB – Time2Talk Team**

**Email: [walsall.icb.time2talk@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.icb.time2talk@nhs.net)**

**Telephone: 01922 603077**

## **Advocacy Support**

Independent advocacy is available through the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.

## **If You Remain Dissatisfied:**

You can contact the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman:

Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

Telephone: 0345 015 4033

## **Learning From Complaints**

All complaints are reviewed for improvement opportunities.

To ensure the practice monitors, handles and reviews complaints in a logical and timely manner, and to keep an audit trail of steps taken and decisions reached, the practice records all complaints received on a dedicated complaints register within Clarity Team Net.

## **Annual Review of Complaints**

- In line with National Guidance, the practice will supply information to the relevant health authority including:
  - The number of complaints received;
  - The subject of the complaints;
  - Whether complaints have been upheld and details of any actions taken;
  - The number of cases referred to the Ombudsman.