

MOUNTJOY FAMILY PRACTICE

Introduction to Practice Complaints Procedure

We know that sometimes we can make mistakes or fail to meet expectations. There will be times when patients/families and carers will express dissatisfaction with the service/care provided at our practice. It is our practice policy to do our best to resolve complaints as early as possible in the process and to ensure that each member of staff has a duty to listen to our patients concerns.

All complaints whether verbal or written should be taken seriously and handled appropriately, sensitively and confidentially by our doctors, nurses and administrative staff. We commit to safeguarding the rights and dignity of our patients and members of staff in the implementation of this policy. Learning from comments, suggestions and complaints helps us to continuously improve our service and that is the spirit in which we receive feedback.

We want to continuously improve the quality of our patients' experience of their care and treatment at all times and will implement changes in response to shortcomings where at all possible and in a timely manner.

Open Disclosure

It is the policy of this Practice to disclose to patients all information relating to shortcomings in care and treatment.

Apology

It is the policy of this practice to offer an apology when we have failed to meet our commitments to patients. We support open disclosure and will communicate with our patients and their families in an open, honest and transparent manner if things go wrong. We believe it is the right thing to do; it is the correct and ethical response to an adverse event and, crucially, we believe it allows patients and their families to make informed decisions regarding their subsequent treatment and care.

Managing complaints

We are committed to resolving complaints at the earliest possible opportunity and all members of our practice team will treat feedback, both positive and negative, with courtesy respect and efficiency and follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which accompanies this policy. Similarly, we expect patients to treat all members of our practice team with courtesy when making a complaint.

We will publicise our procedure so that people know how they can raise an issue and with whom. We will always try to resolve complaints in person and at the earliest opportunity. If the appropriate person is not available to deal with a complaint immediately, we will ensure that a member of our practice team will make contact with the patient and/or family at the earliest possible opportunity.

Where an investigation is indicated patients and families will be included from the outset.

Anonymous Complaints

In the interest of fairness we cannot investigate anonymous complaints.

Vexatious Complaints

If following investigation a complaint is found to be frivolous or vexatious, we will not pursue the complaint any further. If a complaint is found to be vexatious or malicious, there will be no record of the complaint in the file of the staff member / service about which the complaint was made. Before the complaint is deemed vexatious the member of staff who receives it must bring it to the attention of the designated person in the Practice.

Principles

The principles which underpin our policy are **Fairness and Equity**

The investigation of complaints will be fair and transparent and patients should not fear recrimination for raising an issue of concern to them. A consistent and standardised approach will be adopted for the management of all complaints.

Respect

We will treat patients and families with respect and dignity as we also expect to be treated by patients and their families

Accessibility

We will publicise our policy and make it accessible to patients and their families. Special attention will be paid to the needs of people with special requirements e.g. older people, children, people with physical and sensory disability, literacy issues and disadvantaged groups.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

We will try to resolve all complaints effectively and within clearly stated timeframes without compromising other principles.

Impartiality

We will deal with all complaints in an impartial manner. Complainants will have the opportunity to be heard and complaints will be investigated without prejudice to either the complainant, the doctor or member of staff.

Confidentiality

We will treat all information obtained through the course of complaint management in a confidential manner and meet the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

Consent

We will ensure that consent to access patient-confidential information is obtained (or acceptably implied) from the complainant and/or the person on whose behalf the complaint is made.

Accountability

Procedures will be transparent to the complainant during the process of all complaint investigation. Recommendations arising from any investigation will be implemented where resources allow. Recommendations relating to Patient Safety will be given priority and an appropriate action plan will be implemented in a timely manner. Complaints will be recorded and action plans will be monitored ensuring learning from complaints.

Right of Appeal

Patients will be informed of their rights in relation to appeals processes and of other avenues to pursue their complaint if dissatisfied with the local investigation