

Dear Colleague,

R.E. Family Practitioner Services Complaints E-Learning

I refer to previous correspondence, which was issued during 2013, publicising the above E-Learning Package which was developed for staff working within Primary Care.

This Package provides general training and awareness on the HSC Complaints Procedure, '*Complaints in Health and Social Care: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning*' (April 2009), as well as detailing the role and responsibility of the Health and Social Care Board, (the Board), in relation to complaints. However, it has since been revised and updated, to take into account changes within the Procedure.

To access the E-Learning Package, open your web browser and insert the following web address, www3.hscni.net/fps_earning_complaints/ (Please note that the web address should include 'www3' and this is *not* a misprint).

Once you have completed the Package you will be asked to select the appropriate Family Practitioner Service (FPS), and enter the name of your Practice to include your Surgery Code. Entering the Code will give the Board confirmation that you have completed the E-Learning Package.

Whilst the Package, is intended to give you a general overview of how complaints should be handled and responded to, in particular, I wish to draw your attention to the following information.

Adherence to the Complaints Procedure is a statutory obligation, therefore all FPS must designate a senior person of authority, i.e. a Practice Manager or Partner, to take responsibility for complaints handling. Arrangements regarding how patients can make complaints should be publicised and mechanisms for making complaints must be open, flexible and easily accessible for all service users.

All FPS are required to have in place a practice-based complaints procedure for members of the public, detailing how their complaint will be investigated and what

they can do if they remain unhappy following the Practice response, or if they require further assistance or advice. In addition, patients/service users may approach any member of staff to make a complaint about the service they have received, consequently appropriate guidance must be in place for staff to respond to and deal with complainants.

All formal complaints i.e. those in writing, should be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and responded to in full within 10 working days. If any delays are expected, or it is apparent that this timescale will not be met, the complainant should be notified of the revised timescale.

The Board monitors all complaints received in Primary and Secondary Care, therefore, once resolution has been achieved an anonymised copy of the complaint and the Practice response should be provided to the Complaints Department of the Health and Social Care Board.

If you require advice and/or assistance in relation to the content of your practice-based Complaints Leaflet, Board officers can review documentation to ensure it compiles with the Guidance. Board officers are also willing to visit practices and staff to discuss their requirements under the HSC Complaints Procedure and how to investigate and respond to complaints.

Lastly, please note that all Board telephone numbers have changed therefore, I would be grateful if you could ensure that your complaints leaflets are updated accordingly.

Health and Social Care Board, Switchboard – 0300 555 0115

Complaints Hotline Number – 028 9536 3893

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, the E-Learning, or require the Package in hard copy, please contact Alice McKeown in the Complaint's Office at the HSC Board on:

Tel: 028 95 363006

Email: fpsetrainingcomplaints@hscni.net

Yours sincerely,



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