



How to make a complaint about Family Practitioner Services

Family Practitioner Services

(Family Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists and Opticians)

If you have a concern regarding one of these services, we would encourage you to let someone at the Practice or Surgery, know about the problem so that they can try to sort it out immediately.

The Practice will have an information leaflet which will detail how to make a complaint, the telephone number of the complaints officer and when to expect a reply. This should be within 10 working days. However, you may not want to approach the Practice directly. If this is the case, please contact the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health for advice and assistance.

The SPPG Complaints Team may act as '**Honest Broker**'. Within this capacity the SPPG Complaints Team will;

- act as an intermediary between you and the Practice;
- where appropriate make arrangements for independent expert advice, conciliation, lay person assistance; and
- ensure you are kept informed about the progress of your complaint.

Honest Broker is not an alternative to local resolution, nor is it an opportunity for the SPPG Complaints Team to take over investigation. It is about facilitating communications and building relationships between the Practice/pharmacy and the complainant. As an 'Honest Broker' the Complaints Team will also provide advice to both you the complainant and the Practice and facilitate/attend meetings. In addition, you or the Practice can ask the SPPG Complaints Team to act in this role at any point in the complaints process; however agreement must be sought from both parties.

The SPPG Complaints Team are based at:
Complaints Department
12-22 Linenhall Street,
Belfast
BT2 8BS

If you have a complaint concerning a Family Practitioner Service, please contact the SPPG Complaints Team for advice and assistance. You may do this by:

- E-mailing - Complaints.sppg@hscni.net
- Telephoning - 028 9536 3893
- Text Phone - 18001 028 95363893
- Calling in person
- Writing

What happens next?

Your complaint will normally be:

- Acknowledged within two working days Investigated thoroughly
- Treated confidentially
- Responded to fully, in writing, within 20 working days

If there is to be any delay we will let you know the reason for this and when you may expect to receive a detailed reply.

At any stage a meeting can be arranged to discuss your complaint when you may be accompanied by a relative, friend or someone from the Patient and Client Council.

HSC Trust Complaints

Complaints will be handled directly by the HSC Trusts in the first instance, under local resolution. Should you remain unhappy following consideration of the response you receive from the HSC Trust, you can approach the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Under the HSC Complaints Procedure the SPPG Complaints Team will receive information relating to HSC Trust complaints for monitoring and performance management purposes, the SPPG Complaints Team **will not** investigate HSC Trust complaints.

If you are still dissatisfied

You can ask the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman to investigate your complaint. Although you have the right to approach the Ombudsman at any time, she will not usually take on a case unless it has first been through the complaints procedure.

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman:

The NI Public Services Ombudsman
33 Wellington Place,
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freephone: 0800 343 424
Text phone: 028 9089 7789
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Please remember

- The Patient and Client Council.

Throughout the complaints investigation you also have a right to seek the help of the Patient and Client Council.

The Council is an independent body set up to represent your interest in health and social care. It is willing to assist you at any stage of your complaint by providing advice and support.

The Council can be contacted by:

Freephone: 0800 917 0222
E-mail: info.pcc@pcc-ni.net

Accessibility

This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format, to include, Easy Read, Braille, Audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.