

Douglas Pharmacy Ltd t/a Bell Pharmacy

Pharmacy comments, suggestions and complaints procedure

Objectives

This pharmacy has a positive attitude to receiving comments, suggestions or complaints from people. We wish to offer people an explanation for any concern they have and use feedback constructively to improve the services provided by the pharmacy. The pharmacy complaints and comments procedure aims to:

- Provide the fullest possible opportunity for investigation and resolution of a complaint, that satisfies the person while being scrupulously fair to staff;
- Ensure prompt response and quick resolution of complaints;
- Focus on making improvements in service delivery in response to suggestions, compliments and complaints rather than apportioning blame among staff;
- Ensure that patients are aware of how to make a suggestion or complain or pass on a compliment; and
- Encourage staff and pharmacists to listen and talk with those who have a complaint or compliment.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff and pharmacists will be prepared to receive complaints and comments from patients and customers and to assist with investigating complaints. In addition the pharmacy has designated **Doug Hintridge** as the Complaints Manager, who has overall responsibility for dealing with complaints.

Informing patients how to complain

The pharmacy will inform patients how to complain through:

- a note in the practice leaflet;
- a poster displayed in the pharmacy; and
- a comments form available within the pharmacy.

If asked, staff will explain how suggestions, complaints and compliments may be made.

Patient consent

A complaint may be made by a patient or any person who is affected by or likely to be affected by the action, omission or decision of the pharmacy contractor.

A representative can make the complaint where the above person has died; is a child; is unable by reason of physical or mental incapacity to make the complaint himself; or has requested the representative to act on his behalf.

We must be sure, when discussing a patient's treatment with a third party, that the person is authorised to speak on behalf of the patient, so that we do not

breach confidentiality. Generally, therefore, we will require evidence of the consent of the patient, unless circumstances are such that the patient cannot give consent (such as a young child, or a person who does not have the mental capacity to give consent).

In the case of a patient or person affected who has died or who is incapable of making the complaint himself, the representative must be a relative or other person who, in the opinion of the complaints manager, had or has a sufficient interest in his welfare and is a suitable person to act as representative. If the complaints manager is of the opinion that a representative does or did not have a sufficient interest in the person's welfare or is unsuitable to act as a representative, he must notify that person in writing, stating his reasons.

In the case of a child, the representative must be a parent, guardian or other adult person who has care of the child and where the child is in the care of a local authority or a voluntary organisation, the representative must be a person authorised by the local authority or the voluntary organisation.

Immediate health needs

In all cases we will first try and ensure that the patients immediate health needs are being met if necessary taking urgent action before any matters relating to the complaint are tackled.

Confidentiality

Complainants will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. The pharmacy will only discuss confidential information to the extent it is necessary in order to answer the complaint.

Timescale for resolving a complaint

The pharmacy will in normal circumstances investigate and respond to a complaint within 20 working days.

Receiving a verbal complaint

Staff will seek to listen to the patients concerns and if they are able, resolve them immediately. Staff will seek to understand the nature of the complaint and any aspects that are not immediately obvious. Complainants will be encouraged to speak openly and freely about their concerns. Staff will listen and accept the complaint. Staff will write a note of the person's complaint and will ask the person to confirm that the note is accurate at the end of the discussion.

Staff will tell the complainant who will be responsible for dealing with the complaint and that the pharmacy aims to investigate and respond within 20 working days. Staff will pass the complaint to the pharmacy complaints manager to deal with as soon as practicable.

Receiving letters of complaint

These will be passed to the pharmacy complaints manager. If the complainant is not the patient, the pharmacy complaints manager will consider whether it is appropriate to require the consent of the patient in order to investigate the complaint.

Acknowledging a complaint

When a complaint is received orally or in writing, the complaints manager will send an acknowledgement within two working days. The complainant will be advised of how long it will take to investigate and respond. This will normally be within 20 working days. If it takes longer, the patient will be kept informed of progress.

Investigating a complaint

The pharmacy complaints manager will oversee the investigation of a complaint. The complaints manager will make all necessary inquiries such as interviews with the complainant, pharmacists and members of staff. The complaints manager will keep notes of all these interviews using a complaint interview form. If the pharmacy needs to invite the complainant in to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation they will be invited to bring a relative, friend or someone from the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), if they want to.

Resolving a complaint

The pharmacy will offer an apology, if appropriate and aim to give the complainant a full explanation. If appropriate the complainant will be invited to the pharmacy to discuss the complaint. The pharmacy will invite them to bring a relative, a friend or someone from the ICAS with them, if they want to.

At the end of the process the pharmacy will write to the complainant providing an explanation and offering an apology, if appropriate. This letter will advise the complainant that, if they are still not satisfied they can complain to the Healthcare Commission.

If a complainant cannot be satisfied, the pharmacy will try to identify why and try to find ways to resolve the complaint. If resolution is not possible the pharmacy will advise the complainant in writing that they may seek assistance from the local ICAS or may make a complaint to the Healthcare Commission.

Recording

The pharmacy will keep a file of remarks made, forms, investigation notes, letters, action taken etc.

Time limits for the pharmacy accepting complaints

The pharmacy will investigate complaints made within 6 months of the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint occurred, or within six months of the date on which the matter which is the subject of the complaint came to the notice of the complainant. In the event of a complaint being received 'out of time' the complaints manager will decide whether it is still possible to investigate thoroughly. If the decision is made that a complaint will not be investigated because it is out of time the complaints manager will write to the complainant informing them of this and explaining why the decision has been made.

Complaints about the pharmacy and another NHS body

The pharmacy will seek to investigate and resolve these complaints in conjunction with the other body. The pharmacy will get the complainant's permission to liaise with the other body before proceeding. If the complaint is solely about another

body, the pharmacy will get the patient's permission to pass the complaint on to that body.

Complaints and discipline

The complaints procedure is about giving explanations and making improvements. If as a result of a complaint it is necessary to discipline a member of staff, the disciplinary procedure will be used.

Monitoring complaints

The complaints manager will be responsible for helping the pharmacy to make constructive use of feedback from comments and complaints. The pharmacy will keep a log of complaints and make use of feedback from comments and complaints to improve services.

Conclusion

As a pharmacy we will encourage complaints, comments and suggestions from all of our patients and customers, so we can constantly attempt to improve the services we offer. Complaints must be looked upon as an opportunity for improving our services and ultimately securing the future of our business. Complaints should be dealt with in a non-confrontational manner and we should not feel threatened by them. All complaints will be dealt with in a manner that maintains confidentiality for those involved. Only those people within the pharmacy, who need to know, will learn of the complaint.

Our aim is to give our customers the highest possible standards of service and we shall aim to deal swiftly with any problems that may occur