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Complaints Procedure

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Version History			
Version	Date	By Who	Amendment
1.0	Nov-22	Lynda Winter	First Complaints Procedure as a Group Document
1.1	July-24	Lynda Winter	POhWER new provider for patients' Advocacy service
1.2	Mar-25	Lynda Winter	Point added to action we may take re asking patient to change Practices.
1.3	Apr-26	Lynda Winter	Change of contact for ICB from Cambs. & Peterborough to Central East

Mereside Medical strive to offer the best possible treatment and care. However, if you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from any member of the staff working for Mereside Medical, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of an NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria as laid down by the NHS.

How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and directly with the person concerned.

However, if your problem cannot be resolved in this way and you wish to make a formal complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible - ideally within a matter of days or at most a few weeks - because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do this, please let us have details of your complaint within 12 months of the incident that is the cause of the problem, or within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem.

We adhere to the strict rules of patient medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to be assured that you have their permission to do so and would ask that the patient consent form is signed by the patient concerned and returned to us, unless there are exceptional circumstances i.e. illness, incapacity, etc.

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What you should do

You can telephone the Practice to arrange a telephone call with the Practice Operations Manager in order to discuss your concerns. The Practice Operations Manager will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure your concerns are dealt with promptly.

You can also write in; complaints should be addressed to the Practice Operations Manager at the relevant site either via e-mail or by post:

Cathedral Medical Centre, POW Hospital, Lynn Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1DN
cpicb.cathedralmedicalcentre@nhs.net

Haddenham Surgery, The Green, Haddenham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3TA
cpicb.haddenham@nhs.net

Staploe Medical Centre
Brewhouse Lane, Soham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5JD
cpicb.staploe@nhs.net

We will require details of the complaint or concern and include as much detail as possible – dates, times, staff involved, details of telephone calls, etc.

Our Commitment to You

We shall acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within the time scale agreed with you. The time taken to investigate your complaint will depend on its complexity and the number of people involved. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting if that is more appropriate.

When we look into your complaint, we aim to:

- Find out what happened and what should have happened.
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned if this is your wish.
- Ensure the complaint is resolved to your satisfaction.
- Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate.
- Identify what needs to be done to ensure the problem does not arise again.

Our Principles are:

- To get it right
- To be patient focussed
- To be open and accountable

- To act fairly and proportionately
- To put things right
- To seek continuous improvement

Taking matters further

We hope that if you have a problem you will contact us directly. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice.

If you feel it would be helpful to speak to someone independent of the Practice for support and advice in pursuing your complaint you may wish to contact one of the following organisations:-

1. Central East Integrated Care Board (ICB)

As a patient, relative or carer you may sometimes need to turn to someone for help, advice and support and this is where the ICB Patient Experience Team can help. They can offer confidential help and advice, give guidance on the NHS complaints procedure, give advice on where to direct your NHS complaint, provide information about local health services and support groups, and signpost to other organisations such as Independent Advocacy and other patient experience services.

Central East Integrated Care Board, Patient Experience Team - Bartholomew's Walk, Cambridgeshire Business Park, Angel Drove, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4EA

Telephone: 0800 279 2535

Email: cpicb.pet@nhs.net

2. NHS England (NHSE)

Complaints about GP and Pharmacy services are managed by NHS England. You can send your complaint directly to the NHSE England Customer Contact Centre.

NHS England – Customer Contact Centre, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT

Telephone: 0300 311 2233

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

3. Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

If you are unhappy with the final response to your complaint and would like to take the matter further, you can ask the Independent Parliamentary & Health Service to investigate.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman - Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 0345 015 4033

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

4. Who else can help?

If you feel you need support in making your complaints this is available through POhWER, a NHS Complaints Advocacy. They provide a free, independent and confidential support for people who wish to make a complaint about the care they received from the NHS. An advocate can explain the complaints process and give guidance on writing an effective complaint letter and where appropriate you can have one to one advocacy support.

POhWER

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Email: nhscomplaints@pohwer.net

Website: www.pohwer.net/nhs-complaints-advocacy

Our Commitment to Acceptable Behaviour

We recognise that patients who make complaints may have reason to feel aggrieved, upset or distressed. However, in a small number of cases, a patient's behaviour while engaging with us may become unacceptable because it involves abuse of our staff or our service. When this happens, we will take action to protect our staff and maintain our ability to do our work and provide a service to others.

Examples of what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour include:

1. Aggressive, abusive or offensive behaviour

Physical behaviour, language, images (whether face-to-face, via telephone, written e-mails, letters or online) that may cause employees to feel intimidated, uncomfortable, degraded, threatened or abused is not acceptable. This includes abuse about any protected characteristic, as defined by

the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

2. Unreasonable or unacceptable demands

We may consider demands about the nature or scale of our service to be unacceptable. For example:

- Requesting responses in unreasonable timescales;
- Insisting on speaking with senior colleagues or escalating to senior colleagues when not getting the desired answer;
- Making repeated approaches about the same issue without raising new information;
- Vexatious requests for information;
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint; and
- Raising unrelated concerns or refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been given.

3. Unreasonable or unacceptable levels of contact

We may consider communication unacceptable in nature or because of the scale of service expected. For example:

- Continually contacting us in the process of looking at the issue or complaint;
- Numerous calls or e-mails in one day or excessive contract over a short period of time;
- Repeatedly sharing information that has already been shared; and
- Continually reframing the issue or complaint in such a way that it makes it difficult for us to do our job effectively

4. Refusal to co-operate

It is unacceptable if a person refuses to engage with the complaints process by:

- Refusing to provide information and/or evidence.
- Not providing a summary of their concerns.
- Not providing comments or responses to reasonable deadlines.
- Not agreeing to a defined complaint scope within a reasonable timescale.

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Action we might take

Wherever possible we try to work with individuals to rectify the situation and continue communication in a respectful and dignified way for all involved.

Where we are not able to do this, the types of action we would take, include but are not limited to:

- Provide a verbal warning at the time of incident so that the individual has an opportunity to understand the impact of their behaviour and rectify the situation.
- Provide a written warning following the incident so the individual is aware of the impact of their behaviour and can modify it for future interactions.
- Restrict contact to certain communication methods, while taking account of any reasonable adjustments in place.
- Restrict contact to named individuals.
- In very rare cases we would consider placing a behaviour contract on an individual.
- If the basis of the complaint results in the relationship between the Practice and the individual breaking down and cannot be resolved, the individual may be advised to change Practice.

In very exceptional cases we reserve the right to refuse to accept a complaint or future complaints from an individual.

We do take all complaints very seriously, and will endeavour to investigate and resolve all complaints where possible. We anticipate the above unacceptable behaviour from patients to be very rare and will assess each case carefully before classing it as unacceptable.

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PATIENT CONSENT FORM

Full name of patient: _____

Address of patient: _____

_____

Date of birth: _____

I authorise (name of complainant): _____

Address of Complainant: _____

_____

_____

Signature of patient _____

to act on my behalf and to receive any and all such information as may be relevant to the complaint.

CONSENT FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL RECORDS

I hereby give my consent to the organisations investigating my complaint to share any relevant information in order to complete the investigation. I understand that this likely to include disclosure of my personal records.

Signature of patient: _____

Date: _____