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East Clinic Killaloe Practice Complaints Policy

2024

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Introduction to Practice Complaints Procedure

At East Clinic we always try to give our patients the best care possible but there may be times when you feel this has not happened. 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.

If we have gotten something wrong, we will apologize and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us (external decisions made by the HSE) and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

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. Similarly, we expect patients to treat all members of our practice team with courtesy when making a complaint. We will publicize 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 standardized 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 publicize 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 investigations. 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.



Patient Information Leaflet

Your **comments and suggestions** are welcomed and valued. Some people are shy or embarrassed to raise an issue directly with us and you might prefer to fill in this leaflet and put it into the box provided in the surgery. Alternatively you may give it to a member of staff. You might prefer to write a letter or of course tell us face to face. All comments and suggestions are brought to the attention of our team and we try to make improvements accordingly.

If you have a **complaint** about your care we need to hear from you so that we can learn lessons thereby continuously improving our care of patients. We have a written procedure in the Practice to ensure that we manage complaints in the most effective way, to the highest standard and we hope to the satisfaction of our patients.

Complaints Procedure

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with. She or he will try to resolve it for you there and then. However, they may need time to look into it, and as such we will come back to you within 5 working days.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your complaint, the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then submit your complaint formally for further investigation.

Formal procedure:

Step 1

How do I make a complaint?

Fill in the attached sheet and with a sealed envelope drop at reception

or

Talk to your GP

or

any member of our staff

or

Send a letter or email to the Practice

or

Ring us on (061) 376349

Complete the complaint form attached at the end of this document and submit it for attention of the Practice Manager. In the interest of fairness, we cannot investigate anonymous complaints.

We adhere to the strictest rules of medical confidentiality. Therefore if you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm their consent for you to deal with the complaint on their behalf and for us to release medical details to you.

Step 2

We will try to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and will acknowledge it at the earliest possible opportunity and certainly within 5 working days. Our aim will be to have looked into the matter within 10 working days. You will receive a formal reply in writing or you may be invited to meet with us to attempt to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction.

If your complaint is such that it requires an investigation we will set one in progress and inform you of the process and who will carry it out and agree a timeline within which we will work. We will give you the opportunity to comment on the process and if a meeting is arranged you will be invited to bring a friend or relative with you. Our aim will be to try to adhere to a 30 day timeline and if there are reasons why it will take longer we will discuss with you.

Step 3

When looking into a complaint we attempt to:

- Find out what happened and what went wrong and why
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned
- Ensure you receive an apology where this is appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not arise again

We hope that we will be able to resolve your complaint quickly and to your satisfaction but if we believe we need assistance, for example mediation or other external assistance, we may arrange this in consultation with you.

Step 4

When the investigations are complete your complaint will be determined and a final response sent to you. If your complaint is still not resolved to your satisfaction, there are several external options where you may bring your complaint, such as:

- [HSE](#)
- [Medical Council](#)
- [AN BORD ALTRANAIS](#)

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behavior as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behavior, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Comments & Suggestions

Your comments and suggestions are welcomed and valued. Some people feel shy or uncomfortable to raise an issue directly with us and you might prefer to fill in this [comment form](#) and give it to a member of staff. All comments and suggestions are brought to the attention of our team and we try to make improvements accordingly.

