



Oak Tree Health Centre
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Complaints Protocol

The Business Manager - Oak Tree Health Centre, Tyne Avenue, Didcot, OX11 7GD

occg.pm.oaktree@nhs.net

Role responsible for reviewing this Protocol: Business Manager

Date of last review: 1st of April 2021

Date of next review: 1st of April 2022

Purpose

This protocol details the approach of Oak Tree Health Centre to the handling of complaints. The protocol applies to all employees of Oak Tree Health Centre including both clinical and non-clinical staff, and will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

The importance of having a complaints protocol

In spite of the best efforts of our staff it is likely that a complaint will be made by a patient at some time. To reduce the anxiety and apprehension for both patients and staff, at what can be a difficult time, it is essential to have a documented procedure for handling complaints which is understood by both parties.

How complaints can be made

Whilst you may wish initially to discuss verbally the nature of the complaint, we do prefer complaints to be formally submitted to us in writing. In cases in which a patient is unable to communicate a complaint either verbally or in writing then arrangements will be made to facilitate the giving of the complaint.

Complaints should be addressed to:

The Business Manager - Oak Tree Health Centre, Tyne Avenue, Didcot, OX11 7GD

occg.pm.oaktree@nhs.net

Persons who can complain

Complaints can be made by patients or former patients, someone who is affected, or likely to be affected, by the action, omission or decision of individuals working at the Health Centre, or by a representative of a patient who is incapable of making the complaint themselves.

When a complaint is made by a representative on behalf of a child, there must be reasonable grounds for the complaint being made by the representative rather than the child, and the complaint must be being made in the best interests of the child. If this is

not the case, then written notification of the decision not to investigate the complaint will be given to the representative.

Please note that we adhere strictly to the rules of confidentiality; if you are complaining on behalf of someone else then we will need to have their explicit consent, usually in writing, for you to do so.

Time limit for making a complaint

Complaints can be made up to 12 months after the incident that gave rise to the complaint, or from when the complainant was made aware of it. Beyond this timescale it is at the discretion of the Health Centre as to whether to investigate the matter.

Responsibility

The *Responsible Person* is Oak Tree's Senior Partner. He/she is responsible for the supervision of the Complaints Protocol and for making sure that action is taken in response to the outcome of any investigation.

The *Complaints Manager* is Oak Tree's Business Manager. He/she is responsible for the handling and investigation of complaints and the identifying of any deputies to undertake investigative work, patient communication etc.

Complaint handling & investigation

All complaints, however received, will be recorded in the Health Centre's complaints log.

We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 2 working days of its receipt.

If the complaint is against, or involves, the Complaints Manager, the handling and investigation will become the responsibility of the Responsible Person.

We will then investigate the complaint, bringing together information provided by the complainant, studying medical records and any other relevant documents, and interviewing the staff involved.

If necessary the complainant will be contacted to provide more information, either by telephone or, if considered more appropriate, in a face to face meeting. The complainant will be asked if they wish to be accompanied by a person of their choice when attending any face to face meeting. Notes from any conversation or meeting will be recorded.

On completion of the investigation process, we will provide the complainant with a written response, normally within 10 working days. On occasions it may take longer than this if we have to seek information from outside the Health Centre. If so, we will advise the complainant accordingly.

The written response will include:

- an explanation of how the complaint was considered;
- the conclusions reached and any remedial action that will be needed;
- confirmation as to whether the Health Centre is satisfied with the actions taken or which have been planned to be taken;
- the contact details of the NHS England and the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, should the complainant be dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint and would like to refer the matter further

Complaint recording

The Health Centre maintains a formal log of all complaints, which contains:

- each complaint received;
- the subject matter of the complaint;
- the steps and decisions taken during the investigation;
- the outcome of each investigation;
- when the Health Centre informed the complainant of the response period and any amendment to that period;
- whether a report of the outcome of the investigation was sent to the complainant within the response period or any amended period

Complaint review

Complaints received by the Health Centre are to be reviewed periodically at staff meetings to ensure that learning points are shared.

A review of all complaints will be conducted annually by the Complaints Manager to identify any patterns that are to be reported to the Responsible Person. This review will also be submitted to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group or other relevant NHS body and will include:

- the number of complaints received;
- the number of complaints which were considered to be well-founded;
- the number of complaints which the Health Centre has been informed have been referred to the Health Service Ombudsman;
- a summary of the subject matter of each complaint received;
- a summary of any matters of general importance arising out of those complaints, or the way in which the complaints were handled;

- a summary of any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints

The Complaints Manager will notify the Responsible Person of any concerns about a complaint leading to non-compliance; the Responsible Person will then identify the actions needed for the Health Centre to return to compliance.

Publicity

The Health Centre's arrangements for dealing with complaints is publicised by the Complaints Manager on the Health Centre's website.

Unreasonable complainants

When faced with an unreasonable complainant the Health Centre will take action in accordance with page 34 of the Department of Health's publication *Listening, Responding, Improving - A guide to better customer care*.

Feedback other than complaints

Oak Tree Health Centre welcomes feedback at all times.

In a continual effort to review our services, we assess our performance at regular intervals with the help of audits, questionnaires and face-to-face feedback.

The Health Centre keeps records all such feedback.