

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident it may still be

possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply.

We may still need to correspond direct with the patient, or may be able to deal direct with the third party, and this depends on the wording of the consent provided.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome

You have the right to approach the Health Service Ombudsman. The contact details are:

The Parliamentary and Health Service

Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 0154033

You may also approach PALS for help or advice:

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provide confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available from the NHS.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

0800 328 4397 - Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm



How to Complain

A Complaints Form is also available at Reception along with a Third Party Consent form to enable you to make a complaint on someone else's behalf, with their permission

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Making a Complaint

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time they arise with the person concerned and this may be the approach you try first.

Where you are not able to resolve your complaint in this way and wish to make a formal complaint you should do so, preferably **in writing** as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. In any event, this should be:

- Within 12 months of the incident
- Or within 12 months of you becoming aware of the matter

Giving as much detail as you can.

If you are a registered patient you can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written consent. See the separate section in this leaflet.

We are able to provide you with a separate complaints form to register your complaint and also a third-party consent form to enable a complaint to be made by someone else. Please ask at reception for these. You can provide this in your own format providing this covers all the necessary aspects.

Send your written complaint to:

The Practice Manager
Rowlands Gill Medical Centre
The Grove
Rowlands Gill
NE39 1PW

What we do next

We look to resolve complaints as soon as possible.

We will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days, and aim to have looked into the matter within 28 working days. You may then receive a formal reply in writing, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is likely to take longer than this we will let you know, and keep you informed as the investigation progresses.

When looking into a complaint we attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from this, and make it possible for you to discuss the issue with those involved if you would like to do so.

When the investigations are complete a final response will be sent to you.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation (e.g. social services) we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one coordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. Where your complaint has been sent initially to an incorrect organisation, we may seek your consent to forward this to the correct person to deal with.

The final response letter will include details of the outcome of your complaint and also your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied with the response.

Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else

We keep to the strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved, we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that we can deal with someone else about it.

Please ask at reception for the Complaints Form which contains a third party consent form for the patient to sign to enable the complaint to proceed.