

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Useful links

Detailed complaints procedures (including patient information):

NHS Scotland

http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/sites/valuingcomplaints/files/resources/NHS%20Model%20CHP%20%28updated%20Aug%202018%29.%20PDF_0.pdf

Information about the ombudsman <https://www.spsso.org.uk/> and role of defence union

NHS England Complaints Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/how-do-i-give-feedback-or-make-a-complaint-about-an-nhs-service>

NHS Wales

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/contactus/nhscomplaints>

http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/932/Healthcare%20Quality%20-%2030166_Putting%20Things%20Right_a5%20leaflet_English_WEB%20VERSION%20-%20final%20-%202017%2003%2001.pdf

<https://www.ombudsman.wales/>

NHS Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/make-complaint-against-health-service>

Confidentiality, and the handling and storing of complaints files:

https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/confidentiality-good-practice-in-handling-patient-information---english-0417_pdf-70080105.pdf

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1179/access_to_information_held_in_complaint_files.pdf

NES and GMC guidance on duty of candour

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/nwsroom/features-and-articles/duty-of-candour.aspx>

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/CLT/ResourceUploads/4084017/365e385b-f098-4071-be74-397a4d0c2dfa.pdf>

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/candour---openness-and-honesty-when-things-go-wrong>

GMC, MDU, MDDUS and MPS guidance on social media

https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/doctors-use-of-social-media_pdf-58833100.pdf

https://www.themdu.com/press-centre/press-releases/~/_link.aspx?_id=D53CF635A3914548A97B2387F32B97C5&_z=z

<https://www.mddus.com/resources/publications-library/soundbite/soundbite-issue-15/from-negative-to-positive>

<https://www.medicalprotection.org/uk/articles/sco-use-of-social-media>

Reviews of complaints handling

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubadm/94/94.pdf>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180310053122/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/listening-and-learning-the-ombudsmans-review-of-nhs-england-complaint-handling-2009-to-2010>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/data-on-written-complaints-in-the-nhs-2016-to-2017-quarter-3>

Appendix 2: Adapted from “Wounded”, an article by Clare Gerada, GP, former chair of the RCGP, and medical director at the NHS Practitioner Health Programme ²¹

In today’s NHS, patients are encouraged to complain about the service they get. Patients seem more demanding than ever of their “wants” which can often be in conflict with their “needs”. A complex complaint can take months or even years to resolve, leaving the clinician in the middle of a confusing matrix of fear, anxiety and uncertainty. The anxiety caused by the time taken for resolution adds the emotional toll.

Many clinicians feel a complaint to be personal, an attack on their core sense of self and vocational values. Doctors have described their response to a complaint is similar to receiving a terminal diagnosis. It can be felt with such force that they literally feel a heavy weight on their chest, or tightness in their throat. Following shock, there are various stages including denial, anger, shame, fear, isolation, and then (hopefully) resolution. However, for some there is a prolonged “grieving” phase, leading to depression, anxiety, and suicide. The GMC found that there were high rates of suicide amongst those going through their processes in 2012.

What should you do when a complaint lands on your desk? First and foremost, do nothing. Do not respond, do not fire off an email or write a letter. Instead arrange to meet someone you trust, soon. Talking allows for perspective, and your colleague will be able to tell you that complaints are common, most are handled informally, and even those that need formal proceedings have good outcomes. Contact a defence organisation at the earliest opportunity. Talk to colleagues, your family, and health services.

Specialist advice is available from:

- Practitioner health services (for doctors and dentists) <http://php.nhs.uk/>, if outside of England, please see <https://php.nhs.uk/live-outside-london/> including the BMA Wellbeing support telephone counselling service
- The RCN <https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/> or Unison www.unison.org.uk/get-help/
- <https://pharmacistsupport.org/> (for pharmacists)
- There may be local help available through your Health Board e.g. occupational health
- Charitable organisations such as Doctors Support Network <https://www.dsn.org.uk/>

Do not suffer in silence.

Finally, try not to take the complaint personally, A complaint does not mean you are a bad clinician or a bad person. It does not negate all the good work you have done in your life. A complaint is usually more about the system in which we are working, than the personal failing of any one individual.

Appendix 3: The NHS complaints handling procedure

