



Complaints Procedure – Patient Information

The Walcote Practice is committed to providing a high-quality and caring healthcare service. With our ethos of continuous service improvement, we always welcome your feedback and suggestions, and those of your family and/or carers.

It is encouraging to hear from you when you are pleased with the service, and we get things right. It is also important for you to let us know when we have not met your expectations. Where this is the case, we will do our utmost to resolve your concerns/ complaint swiftly.

Making a Complaint

A complaint is a communication from you that requires an investigation and a formal response.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the healthcare service that you have received from The Walcote Practice, please inform us as soon as possible. If you feel able, please directly approach or contact the staff member/s involved as they will often be able to address your concerns quickly.

If you are not completely satisfied with the outcome of this, you can make a complaint in writing by letter or email, or verbally in person or by phone. All complaints are dealt with respectfully, impartially and confidentially, without prejudice or discrimination to the complainant. Information is only disclosed to those who have a demonstrable need to access it, unless required by law. Documentation relating to complaints is kept separately from medical records.

It is recommended that you make a complaint within six months of the event or of the matter coming to your attention. Our independent external adjudicators (see Stage 3) have the right to refuse a complaint where the timeframe means that their likelihood of conducting an effective review is unrealistic.

The Walcote Practice is a subscriber to the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS). Our Complaints Procedure therefore has three stages as outlined below and reflects the principles of the [ISCAS Code of Practice](#). The majority of complaints or concerns are resolved at Stage 1. The ISCAS Patients' Guide is available [here](#), and clearly explains what the Code does and does not cover. If the complaint is not covered by the ISCAS Code, then Stages 2 and 3 will not be available.

The Walcote Practice enters details of all complaints onto our Complaints Register, and also into our Risk Register where appropriate. Documentation relating to complaints is retained in our Complaints File and will be provided to the UK Healthcare Regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), at any time they may request this.

Stage 1

If you wish to make a complaint, please contact in writing by email or letter, or verbally in person or by phoning **01962 828715**, providing as much information as possible. Our Complaints Form is available to help you submit the required information – please view this form [here](#). Please address your letter/email to:

Angela Ward, Practice Manager
The Walcote Practice
Southgate Chambers, 37-39 Southgate Street
Winchester, SO23 9EH

Email: info@thewalcoteppractice.co.uk

Emails are not a secure medium of communication – please consider this when choosing how to send your complaint to us.

If you wish for someone to complain on your behalf, we will seek your written consent to communicate with them, in order to ensure your confidentiality. Should you require assistance from us to aid you to make a complaint, please do let us know.

We will send a written acknowledgement of your complaint within three working days of its receipt, unless a full reply can be sent to you within five working days. It may be necessary to contact you by phone or to hold a meeting to clarify your complaint.

Our Practice Manager will conduct a thorough investigation with the relevant team members and, where applicable, will also review any pertinent medical notes. By making a complaint, you are agreeing to this process.

When the investigation is complete, the Practice Manager will write to you with a clear and complete explanation that addresses all of the points of concern you raised. This full, detailed, honest and open written response will be provided as promptly as possible, usually within 20 working days of our receipt of the complaint. If this timeframe has not been met, we will write to you to explain the reason for the delay and give an anticipated date for completion of the investigation.

You will be given feedback and a detailed outcome response of all actions to be taken to resolve the issue/s, e.g. this may include taking corrective action/ initiating improvements where required, giving apologies where necessary, disseminating learning points to the team where appropriate etc. You will be requested to sign to indicate agreement with the outcome of Stage 1, where this is the case.

Stage 2

If you remain dissatisfied following the receipt of our final Stage 1 response, then you can make a Complaint Review Request to a Practice Director within six months. This is known as Stage 2. Please make this request:

- verbally by phoning [01962 828715](tel:01962828715)
- in writing to the address given on the previous page, addressing it to 'Practice Director'; or
- by emailing info@thewalcoteppractice.co.uk with a subject line of 'F.A.O. Practice Director'

We will send a written acknowledgement of your Complaint Review Request within three working days of its receipt, unless a full reply can be sent to you within five working days.

For the Stage 2 review, we will select a Practice Director who has not been involved with the initial investigation. It may be necessary for the Practice Director to contact you by phone or to hold a meeting for clarification.

The Practice Director will review the handling of your original complaint (and not new complaints), the process followed and the response. They will either confirm the decisions and actions already taken or reach an alternative decision to help resolve the matter.

A detailed written response will be provided within 20 working days of receipt of your Complaint Review Request. The written reply will include details of the findings of and response to the Stage 2 review and it will state whether or not your complaint has been upheld. If this timeframe has not been met, we will write to you to explain the reason for the delay and give an anticipated date for investigation completion.

Stage 3

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you have the right to request an independent external adjudication of the complaint. This must be done in writing within six months of the final response at Stage 2 by contacting:

Independent Healthcare Sector Adjudication Service (ISCAS)
100 St Paul's Churchyard
London, EC4M 8BU
Email: info@iscas.org.uk

Stage 3 is the final stage in the complaints process and the adjudication decision is final. There is no right of appeal against the adjudicator's decision.

Unacceptable Behaviour By Complainants

Please note that if a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or is made in an abusive way or involving unacceptable behaviour, it will fall outside of the remit of this Complaints Procedure. At each stage of the Complaints Procedure, it might be deemed that a patient's behaviour is unacceptable. Walcote Health Ltd has the right not to pursue vexatious or abusive complaints.