



HARTWOOD HEALTH COMPLAINTS POLICY

Title of the policy: Complaints Policy

Purpose: To outline the information and guidance for staff to follow on managing comments and complaints to the service.

Policy: Hartwood Health is committed to providing high-quality service. When something goes wrong with our care, treatment or service provision, we need to know about this to improve the care we provide. To achieve this, Hartwood Health will do the following:

- Encourage comments, suggestions, observations and complaints and act upon these as a means of continual improvement.
- Make sure staff accept comments or complaints in a professional manner and without recrimination.
- Make the system easy to use.
- Thank people formally for any compliments, comments, suggestions and observations.
- Ensure Hartwood Health responds to and investigates complaints fairly and within the time frame.
- Put right anything that has gone wrong and repair any damaged relationships.

Scope: The legislation and guidance staff must adhere to includes:

- Care Quality Commission - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
- Guidance for providers on meeting the regulations:
 - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 (Part 3) (as amended)
 - Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009 (Part 4) (as amended).

Definitions

Comment or observation – a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion about an aspect of the care or treatment we provide or about our service. An example of this might be, ‘Your staff looked rushed off their feet today.’

Suggestion – a verbal or written idea about how we can change, improve or update the care or treatment we provide or about our service. An example might be, ‘Can you send your newsletter round more regularly?’

Compliment – part of our complaints procedure is to look at what we are doing well. Letters, cards, or verbal expressions of appreciation we receive are evidence that we are doing a good job, so we should continue to do what we are already doing well. An example might be, ‘Your staff are really helpful.’

Complaint – any expression of dissatisfaction with the care or treatment we provide, or a failure of our organisation to provide a service to a service user. This can be either written or verbal. It doesn’t matter whether we feel this is justified or not. An example might be, ‘My father has fallen every day this week.’

A complaint should be registered as soon as you can after the date on which the event occurred. If a complaint is received more than twelve months later, we may not be able to investigate properly.

Procedures

1. Receiving Comments, Observations, Suggestions and Complaints

All staff should be aware of the definitions of a comment, observation, suggestion and complaint.

All staff should be able to take details of comments, observations and suggestions in person and to thank the person for taking the time to give these. They should pass these on to one of the clinic owners who will give a formal response thanking the person for these.

All staff should be able to take details of a complaint in person or be able to give the complainant details of clinic owners or an independent advocate who can take the complaint on the complainant's behalf.

Staff should be able to explain that the complaint can be made verbally or in writing and that this can be done by letter to Hartwood Health, 121 Albert Street, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3SR, e-mail to enquiries@hartwoodhealth.co.uk, telephone to 01252 594110 or face to face Paula Wood or Toby Pollard Smith, enquiries@hartwoodhealth.co.uk.

Staff should give details of the time frames for acknowledgement i.e. 5 working days. We will send a formal letter of acknowledgement to the person giving details of the next steps.

A complaints report will be started, containing dates of responses, details of any investigations, the outcomes, dates of final letters and responses.

2. Investigating the Complaint

An investigation of the complaint will take place in the first instance by the one of the clinic owners unless the complaint is about them in particular and then we will ask the other clinic owner who will carry out the investigation.

An investigation may involve:

- Carrying out a record review, reviewing accident books, incident reports etc.
- Reviewing any correspondence about the matter.
- Interviewing the staff member involved or other staff (or the complainant if further information is required).
- Observing practice.
- Reviewing policies and procedures to find discrepancies between policy and practice.
- Looking for other evidence e.g. CCTV footage.

3. Responses

The clinic owner will write to the complainant with the outcome of the complaint on behalf of Hartwood Health.

Investigation, resolution and the final response will take place within 28 days as far as possible. If this takes longer, we will inform the complainant as soon as possible.

The final response will include details of the investigation, the outcome and what we will do to change practice accordingly (if appropriate).

The final response will detail how the person can escalate their complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

4. Improvements

The clinic owner will inform the registered manager of the need for any improvements identified as a result of the complaint so that we can develop an action plan to improve practice accordingly.

Hartwood Health will implement any changes to practice within 4 weeks of the action being identified.

5. Recording

Once Hartwood Health has received a complaint, recording of the complaint will start. This is to include:

- The date of receipt of the complaint.
- The date of the acknowledgment of its receipt.
- Keeping a copy of the acknowledgement on file.
- The date by which we will complete the investigation.
- Details of the investigation.
- Details of the outcome of the investigation.
- The date by which we will send the final letter of response.
- We will keep a copy of the final response letter on file.
- Action plans to improve practice.

6. Review

Review of the comment and complaints policy and system takes place each year or when the following occurs:

- A comment or complaint suggests the system is not working as it should.

Date of Policy: February 2025

Date of next review: February 2026