

Complaints checklist

Establish a protocol in the practice that clearly sets out how complaints are to be managed

- Who manages complaints?
- What procedures will be followed?
- What review mechanisms are there to ensure that any deficiencies or problems identified in the complaints process will be rectified?
- How will the complaint and any action be recorded?
- Set a realistic timeframe for the process.

Assess the complaint to establish how best to resolve it

- What does the patient wish to achieve?
- What information is required?
- Who will participate in the resolution process?
- How will the resolution be conducted?
- Consider how best to communicate with the aggrieved patient.
- Seek remedies that will be satisfactory to the aggrieved party, as well as the practice.

What lessons can be learned from the complaint?

- Can improvements be made to the practice?
- How will this be communicated to staff?
- How will changes be monitored?

Looking after yourself

- Complaints can be stressful: seek support and help.
- Look after any staff involved in a complaint.
- If a complaint has arisen from a significant adverse event, it is often not just the patient and their family who are disturbed by the event: doctors and staff may feel distress, anxiety and concern and it is useful to acknowledge these responses.