

# Complaint Statements

## Guidance Notes

### **Purpose**

If a formal complaint is received and you were involved with the episode of care / have knowledge of the issues raised, you may be asked to provide a written statement to help draft a response.

### **General guidance**

As an employee of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde you are obliged to provide a statement if asked to do so.

Make sure that you know why you have been asked to provide a statement and what the key pieces of information are that you are being asked to explain or describe. There may be several reasons why this has been requested and it is vital that you understand what is being asked of you.

It is your statement. No-one can tell you what you should write. If you are in any doubt whatsoever about writing your statement, seek advice from your line manager, professional lead, service manager, complaints manager or your staff side representative. This is of particular importance if your statement is likely to be used as evidence in a professional conduct matter.

Try to be objective and thorough. Where possible, ensure that you take the opportunity to reflect on the incident, issue or formal complaint that you are writing about. Ensure you are able to document an accurate account of events by referring to related records, for example the patient's medical records. Try to make sure that you are calm and composed when you write your statement.

### **Responding to a formal complaint**

If you receive a written complaint you must pass it immediately to your line manager who will forward it to the complaints manager.

When providing a statement during the investigation of a formal complaint it is important to ensure that all points raised are answered in full and send it to the person who requested your statement.

Do not send your statement or a response directly to the complainant.

If you have any questions about the complaint or your statement, please direct them to the person who is coordinating the response.

### **Constructing your statement**

Your statement is part of an investigation into a formal complaint. You should therefore bear the following in mind.

- Your statement must be legible. Wherever possible it should be typed. If this is not possible, it must be written clearly in black ink.
- The information you give must be factual, consistent and accurate.
- Your statement must provide clear evidence of events.
- Your statement must not be speculative or apportion blame or innocence.

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- The information given in your statement must be relevant to the issue being considered. Where the relevance of the information may be unclear, you must give an explanation.
- Do not use abbreviations or jargon.
- Keep a copy as you may need to refer to it later.
- You are required to share your statement with relevant personnel such as your line manager, professional lead, supervisor, the complaints manager or your staff side representative.
- Following the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2005) the exemption under the Data Protection Act on releasing complaint files to the complainant has been withdrawn. If a complainant requests their complaint file, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde must release it. This includes statements written by members of staff regarding the complaint.