

To: All Community Pharmacies

Tel : 0300 555 0115  
[www.hscboard.hscni.net](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net)14<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Colleague

**MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS: UPDATED E-LEARNING PACKAGE**

Previous correspondence, which was issued during 2015, out-lined the requirements for managing complaints in community pharmacy<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the updated e-learning resource which is available to support management of any complaints received in your pharmacy.

**Requirements for managing complaints**

The legal requirements for managing complaints are specified in both the Terms of Service and the Reform Act and a summary of these requirements is provided in Appendix 1.

**HSC Complaints Procedure**

The HSC Complaints Procedure, "*Guidance in relation to the Health and Social Care Procedure*" has been revised in April 2019.<sup>2</sup>

The HSC Complaints Procedure aims to provide;

- A strengthened, more robust, local resolution stage;
- An enhanced role for commissioners in monitoring, performance management and learning;
- Improved arrangements for driving forward quality improvements across the HSC; and
- Improved arrangements for the delivery of responses to complainants

The changes to the HSC Procedure include;

- Details of the role of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO), known as "the Ombudsman";
- Removal of the restriction on providing electronic responses to complainants;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2659.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-complaints-standards-and-guidelines>

- Removal of the ability for HSC staff to complain to the Ombudsman about the way they have been dealt with under the Complaints Guidance; and
- Clarity on the role and remit of the honest broker in complaints handling;

### **E-learning package**

This Package has been updated and provides general training and awareness on the HSC Complaints Procedure, as well as detailing the role and responsibility of the Health and Social Care Board, (the Board), in relation to complaints.

### Accessing the e-learning

The training can be accessed via:

- The Complaints section of the BSO website at: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2659.htm>
- NICPLD website at <https://www.nicpld.org/>

### Completing the e-learning

On completion of the training you will be required to select the appropriate Family Practitioner Service (FPS), and enter the name of your Pharmacy the Contractor Number Entering this information will give the Board confirmation that you have completed the e-Learning Package.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, the E-Learning, or require the Package in hard copy, please contact the Complaint's Office at the HSC Board on:

Tel: 028 95 363893

Email: [fpsetrainingcomplaints@hscni.net](mailto:fpsetrainingcomplaints@hscni.net)

Yours sincerely



**Liz Fitzpatrick**  
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**HSCB Corporate Services**



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**Management**

CC. CPNI  
NICPLD

## Legal requirements for managing complaints

(1) Under **Terms of Service, Pharmaceutical Service Regulations (NI) 1997**, every pharmacy is required to have in place a complaints procedure which includes:

- Provision of information within the pharmacy about the complaints procedure
- A specified person who deals with complaints
- Management of complaints - all complaints must be:
  - Recorded in writing
  - Acknowledged within 3 working days
  - Properly investigated *and*
  - A written summary of the investigation and conclusions provided to the complainant within 10 working days.
- Keeping records of all complaints and associated correspondence

(2) Furthermore, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 8(1)(b) of the **Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009** set out Amendment Directions to the Health and Social Care Board on procedures for dealing with complaints about family health practitioners which came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

These Directions set out the following:

*“For the purposes of monitoring complaints the HSC Board shall require the practitioner to –*

- (a) Forward an anonymised copy of-*
- i. each written complaint; and*
  - ii. each response, to the HSC Board within 3 working days of the response being issued.”*