



**PMC**  
Proserpine Medical Centre

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*Complaints Policy and Procedure Manual*

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## Table of Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Policy .....                               | 2 |
| Process for Managing Complaints .....      | 2 |
| Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality ..... | 3 |
| Continuous Improvement.....                | 3 |
| Procedure - Employees .....                | 4 |
| Procedure – Patients .....                 | 4 |

## Policy

Proserpine Medical Centre (PMC) supports the right of every employee to lodge a grievance with their manager if they believe a decision, behaviour or action affecting their employment is unfair. An employee may raise a grievance about any performance improvement action taken against them.

We aim to resolve problems and grievances promptly and as close to the source as possible. When necessary, Proserpine Medical Centre will escalate a grievance to the next higher level of authority for more discussion and resolution and continue escalating it to the level above until it is resolved.

Managers will do their utmost to action grievances objectively, discreetly and promptly. Be aware that grievances that are misconceived, vexatious, and lacking substance may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee lodging the grievance.

PMC acknowledges that patient complaints provide an opportunity for service improvement. Our complaint management system aligns with RACGP Standards and ensures:

- Respectful handling of patient concerns with confidentiality and professionalism.
- Prompt acknowledgment and resolution, with patients informed throughout the process.
- Thorough investigation and documentation, with outcomes recorded in the practice's Compliments and Complaints Register.
- Escalation to external agencies where necessary, including the Office of the Health Ombudsman (QLD) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

## Process for Managing Complaints

### 1. Receiving a Complaint

- Patients may submit complaints through verbal, written, or electronic means.
- A notice in the waiting room and on the practice information sheet provides details on how to lodge complaints, including contact details for QLD state health complaints agencies and Commonwealth agencies.

### 2. Acknowledging a Complaint

- All complaints are acknowledged within five business days.
- The complainant is informed of the investigation process and expected response timeframe.

### 3. Investigating and Resolving a Complaint

- The Practice Manager reviews and assesses the complaint, consulting with relevant staff.
- Corrective actions are determined and implemented where necessary.
- The complainant is notified of the resolution or ongoing actions within 28 days.

### 4. Documentation and Reporting

- All complaints are recorded in the Compliments and Complaints Register.
- Serious complaints are discussed at clinical team meetings to identify service improvement opportunities.
- Trends and patterns in feedback are analysed to enhance service delivery and patient experience.

### 5. Escalation to External Agencies

- If a complaint cannot be resolved internally, patients are advised of their right to escalate concerns to the Office of the Health Ombudsman (QLD) (Phone: 133 646, Website: [www.oho.qld.gov.au](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au)) or AHPRA (Phone: 1300 419 495, Website: [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)).

## **Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality**

PMC collects and manages patient feedback in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Health Ombudsman Act (QLD). All feedback data is stored securely and used solely for quality improvement and patient care enhancement.

## **Continuous Improvement**

- PMC integrates patient feedback into its Quality Improvement Plan.
- Feedback outcomes are shared with staff during training sessions and clinical meetings to enhance service delivery.
- Patients are informed of improvements resulting from their feedback via the practice website and posters in the waiting area.

## Conclusion

Proserpine Medical Centre is committed to maintaining a patient-centred, transparent, and responsive feedback system that aligns with RACGP Standards and best practice guidelines. Our approach ensures that patients' voices are heard and that their concerns lead to meaningful improvements in healthcare delivery.

## Procedure - Employees

1. The employee should try to resolve the grievance as close to the source as possible. This can be informal and verbal. At this stage, every possible effort should be made to settle a grievance before the formal grievance process starts. If the matter still can't be resolved, the process continues and becomes formal.
2. To start the formal grievance the complainants must fully describe their grievance in writing, with dates and locations wherever possible and how they have already tried to settle the grievance.
3. The person(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should be given the full details of the allegation(s) against them. They should have the opportunity and a reasonable time to respond before the process continues.
4. If the grievance still can't be resolved, refer the matter to the most senior manager for consideration and a final decision. A grievance taken to this level must be in writing from the employee.

## Procedure – Patients

1. If a patient is not satisfied the way an employee has treated them, the patient is to be referred to the Practice Manager. This can be informal and verbal. At this stage, every possible effort should be made to settle a grievance before the formal grievance process starts. If the matter still can't be resolved, the process continues and becomes formal.
2. To start the formal grievance the complainants must fully describe their grievance in writing, with dates and locations wherever possible and how they have already tried to settle the grievance.
3. The person(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should be given the full details of the allegation(s) against them. They should have the opportunity and a reasonable time to respond before the process continues.

4. If the grievance still can't be resolved, refer the matter to the most senior manager for consideration and a final decision. A grievance taken to this level must be in writing from the employee.