4th June 2020

Dear Practice Manager

**NHS Complaints Advocacy Service - POhWER**

I am writing to provide you with an overview about our service.

NHS complaints advocacy is a statutory service. By law anyone who wishes to complain about their NHS care or treatment is entitled to advocacy support – whoever they are, whatever their complaint.

POhWER Advocacy has been commissioned by the local authorities to provide the NHS Complaints Advocacy service in Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland. The service is free, independent of the NHS and confidential.

Advocates can support clients by:-

* Providing information about the NHS complaint procedure and explain options along the way.
* Helping to raise their complaint with the right organisation.
* Helping to formulate the person’s thoughts and write a clear letter detailing the issues they wish to be investigated.
* Supporting our clients at meetings with the NHS professionals to either raise their concerns, receive their first response to their complaint face to face, or to discuss their outstanding issues if they have further concerns following the initial response from the Service Provider.
* We empower our clients to do as much as they can for themselves.
* If a complainant doesn’t achieve local resolution, then we support clients who wish to go to the second tier of the NHS Complaint procedure by helping them to make an application to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) and following up with the PHSO until the client receives their final response.

Although we are here to support our clients, we remain neutral and do not own or express any opinions regarding the complaint nor do we act to influence the decisions of our clients.

We are involved in the process to ensure that procedure is followed correctly, that complainants are aware of how the system works and understand their rights and entitlements within this. We also work to make sure that a complaint progresses through the system correctly so that matters are concluded for all parties as swiftly and easily as possible.

POhWER has locally based advocates who support people to raise their concerns using the NHS complaints procedure explaining their options along the way. The Advocates are not legally or medically qualified as the complaint process is not a legal process and should not involve any legal personnel. The system is designed to be accessed by laymen and so medical training is also not required. As advocates, we are specifically qualified in advocacy and are experienced in supporting people within the NHS complaints process.

As NHS Complaints Advocacy is a statutory provision for those wishing to use the NHS Complaints process, can we ask that you update your practice complaint policy to include details of POhWER or include the following statement and link on your website.

**You may also wish to contact POhWER, NHS Complaints Advocacy Service for support with your complaint.  POhWER provide a free, confidential and independent service to support people with their NHS complaint.**

**POhWER can be contacted in the following ways: Telephone: 0300 200 0084 or by email:**[**pohwer@pohwer.net**](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)**.  Their website address is:** [**www.pohwer.net/leicester-city**](http://www.pohwer.net/leicester-city)

We have also attached an electronic version of our POhWER leaflet, which you can include on your webpage and make available to patients (for example, leaflets can be enclosed with your complaint acknowledgement letter). Should you require hard copies of our leaflet, please let us know and we can provide. Please note that we have literature that is tailored for our clients’ needs including foreign languages, large print etc.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further or would like us to take part in a staff training session or a meeting.

Warm regards

**Ketan Paw**

Ketan Paw

NHS Complaints Advocate for Leicester City & Rutland

E-mail: [k.paw@pohwer.net](mailto:k.paw@pohwer.net)