

## **PATIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If you have a complaint or concern about the service that you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in the Practice, please let us know. We operate a Practice Complaints Procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our system meets national criteria.

### ***How to Complain***

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible - ideally, within a matter of days or at most a few weeks - because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily.

You should normally make a complaint within twelve months of the event, or within twelve months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about. However, these time limits may be waived if there are good reasons why you could not complain earlier and if we are still able to investigate the complaint fairly and effectively in spite of the delay.

Complaints can be made either orally or in writing to the Operations Assistant, Helen Wiffen, Reception Manager, Mandy Grater, or Practice Manager, Mr Paul Netherton.

### ***What We Will Do***

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days either orally or in writing and will offer to discuss the matter with you.

We will offer you a discussion with the Practice Manager or Reception Manager to agree a timeframe for resolution and to reach an agreement with you on how you wish the complaint to be handled and the likely period for completion of the investigation and response to you. If you would prefer not to accept the offer of a discussion we will determine a specified response period and notify you in writing of that period.

We will aim to investigate and deal with all complaints efficiently and speedily. We will send you a written response with a report on the investigation as soon as reasonably practicable. If we are not able to meet the response deadline we have agreed with you, we will contact you to advise why and negotiate another timescale.

All oral complaints will be recorded in writing by the Practice and you will be provided with a copy of the written record on request.

Prepared 17 July 2014  
Last Reviewed: 28 June 2019  
Next Review due: June 2020

#### **Partners:**

Dr Helen Weaver      Dr R A Fox      Dr J Holt      Dr Claire Hutt      Dr T Powell      Dr Kelly Gladwish-Harris

#### **Assistants:**

Dr Marlett Smit   Dr W Pearson   Dr Suzanne Summers   Dr Hannah Collins   **Registrar:** Dr Paige Allen

**Practice Manager:** Paul Netherton

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When we look into your complaints, we will aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong
- advise you what we will do to put the matter right
- make sure you receive an apology where this is appropriate.
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.

We hope that if you have a problem, you will use our Practice Complaints Procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve the services provided by our Practice.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint at local level you can ask the Ombudsman to independently review your case by writing to:

The Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Or email  
Phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Or phone: 0345 015 4033  
Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

## ***If You Need Help***

If you need assistance in making a complaint you can contact the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service at:

SEAP Hastings  
Upper Ground Floor  
Aquila House  
Breeds Place  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 3UY

Tel: 0330 440 9000  
Email: [info@seap.org.uk](mailto:info@seap.org.uk)  
Fax: 01424 204687

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Although the Practice would welcome the opportunity to investigate your complaint, you may prefer to choose to make your complaint to the NHS Commissioning Board , details as follows:

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net  
Contact Number: 0300 311 2233

Postal address:

NHS Commissioning Board  
PO Box 16738  
REDDITCH  
B97 9PT

## ***Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else***

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have their permission to do so. A letter signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

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## The NHS complaints process

### Stage one: Making a complaint

If you're not happy with an NHS service you can complain (verbally or in writing) to your service provider such as your GP, dentist, hospital or pharmacist. If you cannot make a complaint yourself, then you can ask someone else to do it for you.

Every NHS organisation has a complaints procedure. To find out about it, ask a member of staff, look on the hospital or trust's website, or contact the complaints department for more information.

Most problems can be resolved at this stage.

However, if you feel too uncomfortable to complain to the service provider directly then you can make a complaint to the commissioner of the services instead. NHS services are commissioned, planned and paid for by either NHS England or Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

**Note: if you have already complained to your service provider then the commissioner will not be able to reinvestigate the same concerns. In this case you should proceed to stage two of the complaints process.**

NHS England is responsible for purchasing primary care services such as GPs, dentists, pharmacists, optical services and some specialised services, and you should contact them if you wish to complain about any of these services.

When you contact NHS England via email ([england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)) ensure you state 'For the attention of the complaints manager' in the subject line.

You should provide as much information as possible to allow NHS England to investigate your complaint, such as:

- your name and contact details
- a clear description of your complaint and any relevant times and dates
- details of any relevant healthcare providers or services
- any relevant correspondence, if applicable

Contact your local CCG for secondary care including hospital treatments, emergency care and some community services, like district nursing.

### When should I complain?

As soon as possible. Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the date of the event that you're complaining about, or as soon as the matter first came to your attention.

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The time limit can sometimes be extended (so long as it's still possible to investigate the complaint). An extension might be possible, for instance in situations where it would have been difficult for you to complain earlier, for example, when you were grieving or undergoing trauma.

If you made your complaint to NHS England you will receive the findings of the investigation together with an appropriate apology and the changes or learning that have taken place as a result of the investigation.

## Stage two: I am not happy with the outcome of my complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who is independent of the NHS and government.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

If you have problems with your hearing or speech then you can use a textphone (minicom) on 0300 061 4298. (Calls to these numbers cost the same as a call to a UK landline.) You can also call using Text Relay.

Include the following details in your complaint. Visit the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman website for more detailed advice.

- your name, address and telephone number
- name and contact details of anyone helping you with the complaint
- name and contact details of the healthcare provider you wish to complain about
- the factual details of your complaint (listing the main events and when they happened) •why you think your previous complaint wasn't resolved to your satisfaction, and how this has caused you injustice
- details of the complaints you've already made to the healthcare provider and the outcome of their investigations
- copies of any relevant documents (it's usually helpful to number these and provide a list) Keep copies of everything you post, and make a note of when you send it.

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