



## **Practice complaints procedure**

We aim to provide high quality, efficient healthcare services. Unfortunately from time to time problems do occur. Our intention is to resolve problems at the earliest opportunity and to learn from our mistakes. We always try to learn from complaints to prevent similar situations from happening in future. We always take time to investigate and we share our learnings in team meetings. We don't want you to be unhappy as that makes us unhappy. We want to put things right if things have gone wrong. We are sorry if you are reading this as you would like to make a complaint.

If you have a complaint, dissatisfaction or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know.

We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of a NHS system for dealing with complaints. The first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is 'Local Resolution'. Your complaint should be made in the first instance to the practice as we can work with you to help resolve your concerns.

## **How to complain**

**Talk to us** – please ask to talk with one of the management team

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise with the person concerned. We aim to help either on the day or within a day or two wherever we can.

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 because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem.

## **Write to us**

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager or any of the doctors. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager to discuss your concerns. To help us understand what we can do to support a resolution it will be a great help if you can provide us with clear and specific issues.

## **How we aim to respond**

Acknowledgement of oral complaints within 3 working days if we have not been able to resolve within a day or so

Acknowledgement of written complaints within 3 working days

Investigation which will

- find out what happened and what went wrong
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem those concerned (if you would like this)
- make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again

On occasion it may be necessary to conduct more complex investigations or talk with staff members who may be away. We will let you know when this is the case.

## **Complaining on behalf of someone else**

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

## **Independent Assistance**



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 our practice.

### **Healthwatch**

Healthwatch is the name of the consumer champion for health and social care.

At a local level, Healthwatch works to help people get the best out of their health and social care services, providing them with advice and information on local services.

In West Sussex they also deliver the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS).

*‘Advocacy is taking action to support people to say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests and obtain services they need. Advocacy providers and Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side, promoting social inclusion, equality and social justice’ (The Advocacy Charter)*

You can contact Healthwatch West Sussex IHCAS by phoning 0300 012 0122 or by email: [ihcas@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:ihcas@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

Healthwatch also has a range of very useful self-help guides and information.

### **If you are not satisfied with our response to your letter you can contact NHS England**

NHS England

If, after contacting us, there is an issue that we are unable to resolve any complaints, issues and enquiries can be directed to NHS England.

Tel: 0300 311 2233

Email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

### **The Health Service Ombudsman**

If you remain unhappy after local resolution, then you can complain to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and Government. You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
LONDON  
SW1P 4QP

Telephone 0345 015 4033 - Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm | Friday 8.30am to 12pm

E-mail [OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk)

Website [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

### **Where can I get further advice and help?**

#### **NHS 111**

Call NHS 111 or your local Citizens Advice Bureau

The Department of Health’s website also has information on the NHS complaints procedure – [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)