



## Procedure for Complaints, Concerns and Suggestions – Patient Leaflet

We believe that comments, suggestions, and complaints can be useful in helping patients to express ideas and real grievances in a constructive way and in helping the Practice to monitor standards of performance. At the same time Practice staff can be upset when a complaint is made, and abusive comments made over the reception desk can disrupt the smooth running of the whole Practice. We have a policy that tries to consider these apparently conflicting factors.

### Our objectives

The way we handle complaints is intended to achieve the following:

- To allow patients to express negative feelings to the Practice when they feel that the Practice has not provided a high standard of care.
- To enable patients to receive an explanation of what had happened and, where appropriate, an apology
- To protect those working in the Practice from verbal and physical abuse
- To use information gained from complaints to improve working practices, where appropriate

### Our procedure

All complaints are processed by the Operations Manager Victoria Phillips or in her absence the Managing Partner Kath Horne. Doctors to whom patients make comments or criticisms about the quality of care should ask the patient if they wish to complain, in which case they be referred to the Operations Manager Vickie Phillips.

#### 1. 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 formal 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. If this is not possible then there are time limits, and you are required to provide us with details of your complaint either within six months of the incident that caused the problem or within six months of discovering that you have a problem provided this is within twelve months of the incident.

Formal complaints should be addressed to Mrs Victoria Phillips Operations Manager. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with her to discuss your concerns. She will explain the complaints' procedure to you and will make sure your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

## 2. What we shall do

We will aim to acknowledge your complaint within two working days via the telephone, we will carry out a full investigation and we will respond to you in writing within 30 days. A Clinical Partner will review the complaint response prior to us sending it to you. When we investigate your complaint, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong.
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem with 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 does not happen again.

If you are not satisfied with the response, we will meet with you to discuss this further.

## 3. 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 somebody else, we must know that you have their permission to do so. In these instances, we will seek written & signed permission from the patient in question to discuss the complaint with a third party of their behalf. We recognise, of course, that some people will be incapable (because of their illness) of signing such an authority, in this case we will work with you on a patient-by-patient basis.

## 4. If you are not satisfied with our response

Usually, most complaints or problems can be dealt with within our own practice complaints' procedure to the satisfaction of both the practice and the complainant. We believe this will give the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our service. However, if after receiving our response you are not satisfied you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or the Care Quality Commission who will review your complaint.

A member of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman team will be allocated to your case and will review the issues it raises, with the help of expert advice if necessary.

Health Service and Parliamentary Ombudsman:  
**complaints helpline: 0345 015 4033**

[phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)

You may also wish to notify the Care Quality Commission (CQC) of any complaint regarding quality of care – [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk). The CQC encourage patients to share information with them in order to use the information to help improve services for everyone; however, CQC is not able to investigate an individual patient complaint.

You can also obtain support and advice from ICAS - **the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service**. ICAS who offer free confidential help and support to make a complaint. **Contact ICAS on 01225 762723, [southwest.icas@seap.org.uk](mailto:southwest.icas@seap.org.uk)**

## **5. Complaining about Patients**

Sometimes patients' behaviour causes doctor and staff concern. If this does happen, you will be given a written warning regarding your behaviour. If the problem continues you and your family will be asked to register with another practice.

**Cadbury Heath Healthcare**  
**January 2024**