**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – Patient leaflet**

If you have a complaint 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. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

### **Where do I start?**

Since April 2009, the NHS has run a simple complaints process, which has two stages.

1. Ask your GP, hospital or trust for a copy of its complaints procedure, which will explain how to proceed. Your first step will normally be to raise the matter with the practitioner, e.g. the nurse or doctor concerned, or with their organisation, which will have a complaints manager. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can raise the matter with the relevant commissioning body such as the NHS England or a local CCG. The process is called local resolution, and most cases are resolved at this stage.
2. If you're still unhappy, you can refer the matter to the [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/), who is independent of the NHS and government. Call 0345 015 4033

### **Who can help?**

Making a complaint can be daunting, but help is available with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service. Officers from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offer confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters to patients, their families and their carers.

**How to complain**

We hope that most problems can be resolved quickly and easily, 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. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

* Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
* Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

In the first instance we will encourage you to request a telephone call back from the Practice manager. The Practice managers will give you a call back within 48 hours. During the call back, they will ascertain the details and then look in to the matter to help resolve the issue. If necessary they can set up a face to face meeting to discuss the matter further.

If you are not satisfied with this outcome then we will require you to put your complaint in writing and address it to the Practice Manager. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

**What we shall do**

We shall acknowledge your complaint within two working days and aim to have looked into the complaint within ten working days of the date when you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with the people involved. When we look into 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 doesn’t happen again.

**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 his or her permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.