

SANDWICH MEDICAL PRACTICE

Practice Complaints Procedure

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 the NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints 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. 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; or
- within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager or any of the doctors. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager or any of the doctors in order to discuss your concerns. He/she will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

What we will do

We will acknowledge all written complaints within three working days and aim to have looked into your complaint as soon as possible after you have 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 will 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 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.

Complaining to the Kent & Medway ICB

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. This does not affect your right to approach the local Integrated Care Board, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us **or** you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

In these circumstances you may contact the NHS Kent & Medway Patient Experience Team, 2nd Floor, Gail House, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone ME15 6NB. Telephone 01634 335095, Option 7. Email kmicb.patientexperience@nhs.net The Patient Experience Team is available from 8 am – 4 pm, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, and will aim to respond as soon as possible. You will receive an acknowledgement within three working days.

You may also be able to seek advice from the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service on 0300 330 5454 or via their website at www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org or you can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau on 08444 111 444 – www.citizensadvice.org

If you are not satisfied with the local or regional attempts to deal with your complaint you should contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman at Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP. Telephone 0300 061 4298 or email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk – website www.ombudsman.org.uk

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