



## Comments & Complaints

Village Health Group welcomes any feedback. We constantly strive to give patients the best possible care but we are aware that we don't always meet the high standards our patients have a right to expect and, or those which we set ourselves. We regularly review and make changes to our services in light of patient feedback.

Complaints can be made verbally to any staff or in writing to the Practice Manager. If you would like to make a compliment about a service that you've received, please email or write to us

### **The Practice follows 6 principles when dealing with complaints:**

1. Getting it right
2. Being open and accountable
3. Putting things right
4. Being patient focused
5. Acting fairly & proportionately
6. Seeking continuous improvements

For all written complaints we will strive to acknowledge your complaint within 48 hours. Your complaint will then be investigated by the management team and within 4 weeks we will try to:

- address your concerns fully
- provide you with an explanation
- provide an apology if required
- discuss any action that may be needed
- If necessary, arrange a meeting with all parties concerned

We hope that you will be satisfied that we have dealt with your complaint thoroughly. However, if this is not possible and you wish to continue with your complaint, we will direct you to the appropriate authorities.

We hope you will use it to allow us to investigate and, if necessary, put right any problems you have identified or mistakes that have been made. Please help us to help you.

If you use this procedure, it will not affect your right to complain to the NHS England if you so wish.

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 to authorize you to complain on their behalf and for us to discuss them with you.

## **Complaints process**

There are four parts to the complaints procedure and our complaints procedure is based on these four elements:

1. Initial Stage
2. Investigation
3. Informal Meeting/Written Explanation
4. Follow-up and Conclusion

Our line managers ensure the complaints process is followed in a timely fashion. The Practice Manager has overall responsibility for the complaints system.

### **Initial stage**

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, at the time they arise by speaking with the Practice Manager and the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a written complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible, ideally on the day. This is because the sooner we know about a problem, the easier it will be for us to establish what has happened. Complaints should be addressed to Anna Kirk our Practice Manager. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager to discuss your concerns. 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.

### **Investigation**

Presuming that the practice complaints procedure is to be used, the complainant needs to be assured that the practice will:

1. deal with matters promptly – the aim being to complete enquiries within 14 days, with a maximum of four weeks
2. undertake a detailed investigation
3. offer a meeting to discuss the outcome of the investigation if appropriate
4. advise the complainant that they may bring a 'friend' to the meeting
5. inform the complainant if there appear to be any delays or problems

### **Informal Meeting / Written Explanation**

If there is an informal meeting, the practice should reassure the complainant that:

1. the matter has been taken seriously
2. the complaint has been fully investigated
3. they will receive a detailed explanation
4. they will receive an appropriate apology if necessary, but will always receive a statement of regret that the incident has occurred

### **Follow-Up**

The action taken is entered in our complaints log and a record of any relevant meeting/s and/or a copy of the letter sent is kept in the complaints file in case further action results.

## Learning From Complaints and Patient Feedback

Complaints and patient feedback logs are regularly reviewed in the Clinical Quality and Audit and Operations meetings to:

1. Determine whether any audits are required as a result
2. Determine whether and process needs to be reviewed
3. Determine how to measure the effectiveness of any changes already implemented

## Sharing of Learning and Actions from Complaints

The information from the annual complaints audit and the anonymised summary of learning & action points from complaints will be shared via the next practice training session and there will be a multi-disciplinary discussion.

If the complainant is not satisfied, they should be alerted to their right (under the practice complaints procedure) to take the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman which is an independent body established to promote improvements in healthcare through the assessment of the performance of those who provide services. You can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on 0345 015 4033 or write to them at:

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

Patient complaints can be taken to NHS England contact details are:

NHS England

By email to: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

Please state "For the attention of the Complaints Team" in the subject line.

By telephone: 0300 311 22 33 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesdays when they open at the later time of 9.30am. They are closed on bank holidays.) they will take a complaint and pass it on to a case officer.

By post to: NHS England PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied by the response to their concerns NHS England offers mediation for formal complaints. The patient advice and liaison service (PALS) may be able to help resolve the matter promptly.

The website link for PALS is: [What is PALS \(Patient Advice and Liaison Service\)? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Telephone us:** 08000 851067