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## COMPLAINTS POLICY

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The patients at The Village Doctor have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of NHS care, treatment or service, and although The Village Doctor is a private GP service we try and abide by the NHS constitution of complaints. This is written into the [NHS Constitution on GOV.UK](#).

Everyone who a regulated service in England must have their own complaints procedure.

The information on this page will guide you through the complaints process at The Village Doctor, as well as the core requirements for NHS complaints handling.

The Village Doctor encourages feedback because it's used to improve services. If you wish to share your views and experiences, positive or negative, simply speak to a member of staff.

Many service providers have feedback forms available on their premises or websites.

If a patient is unhappy with our service, it's often worthwhile discussing your concerns early on with the provider of the service, as they may be able to sort the issue out quickly.

Most problems can be dealt with at this stage, but in some cases you may feel more comfortable speaking to someone not directly involved in your care.

You can often find information in waiting rooms, at reception, on the service provider's website, or by asking a member of staff.

You can either complain to the NHS service provider directly (such as a GP, dentist surgery or hospital) or to the commissioner of the services, which is the body that pays for the NHS services you use. You cannot apply to both.

In the event of a complaint about more than one organisation – perhaps a complaint that includes issues about your GP, local hospital and ambulance service – the organisations must co-operate with each other to make sure you get a co-ordinated response.

## **Making a complaint**

Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of an incident or of it coming to your attention.

This time limit can be extended provided you have good reasons for not making the complaint sooner and it's possible to complete a fair investigation. This will be a decision taken by the complaints manager in discussion with you.

You can make a complaint verbally, in writing or by email. If you make your complaint verbally, a record of your complaint will be made and you'll be provided with a written copy.

If you're complaining on behalf of someone else, include their written consent with your letter (if you're making your complaint in writing) as this will speed up the process.

If the person cannot give their consent, for example, if they have died or lack mental capacity, or are a child who cannot complain for themselves, you may be able to complain for them.

## **What to expect**

You should expect an acknowledgement and the offer of a discussion about the handling of your complaint within 3 working days of receiving your complaint.

The CQC suggests that communication acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within three working day

If you accept, the discussion will cover the period within which a response to your complaint is likely to be sent.

There's no set timeframe, and this will depend on the nature of your complaint.

## **Complaints protocol:**

1. Make a complaint using the complaint form or in writing.
2. You should expect to receive a formal acknowledgment of your complaint within 48 hours.
3. We aim to respond within 28 days. We will use the time to investigate your complaint and reflect on any issues that were highlighted. We also aim to resolve the complaint in our response. We will let you know if we need more time to investigate.

If, in the end, the response is delayed for any reason, you should be kept informed. Once your complaint has been investigated, you'll receive a written response.

The response should set out the findings and, where appropriate, provide apologies and information about what's being done as a result of your complaint. It should also include information about how the complaint has been handled and details of your right to take your complaint to the relevant ombudsman.

### **If you're not happy with the outcome**

If your problem persists or you're not happy with the way your complaint has been dealt with locally, you can complain to the relevant ombudsman.