

The River Surgery

Comments, complaints and suggestions

Our aim is to provide the highest level of care for all our patients. We will always be willing to hear if there is any way that you think that we can improve the service we provide.

Making a complaint

If you have any complaints or concerns about the service that you have received from the doctors or staff working for this practice, please let us know.

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.

The Practice Manager will be pleased to deal with any complaint. They will explain the procedure to you and make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. You can make your complaint:

In person – ask to speak to The Practice Manager.

In writing – some complaints may be easier to explain in writing - please give as much information as you can, then send your complaint to the practice for the attention of The Practice Manager as soon as possible.

What we shall do

Our complaints procedure is designed to make sure that we settle any complaints as quickly as possible.

We shall aim to acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within 25 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 wish to
- make sure you receive an apology, where appropriate
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

At the end of the investigation your complaint will be discussed with you in detail, either in person or in writing.

Please note that on occasion, it may be necessary for the Practice to provide information about yourself and the treatment you have received, to our insurers or legal advisers. For the purposes of obtaining advice about your complaint, all correspondence would be on an anonymised basis.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we strictly adhere to the rules of patient 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 letter signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

What you can do next

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe that this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and the opportunity to improve our practice.

Alternatively, should you feel that you cannot raise your complaint with us you may contact The Patient Experience Team based at Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB. They provide confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide. Telephone 01992 566122 or via emailhweicbwe.patientfeedback@nhs.net

If you remain dissatisfied with the responses to your complaint, you may subsequently refer the matter to The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for further investigation. The complaint must be referred to the Ombudsman within 12 months of the final correspondence at completion of local resolution (Practice or ICB level). This will usually be 12 months from receipt of the final response letter relating to the original complaint.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Helpline: 0345 015 4033
<http://www.ombudsman.org.uk>

Free, confidential and independent support is offered by the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS).
Their contact details are:

POhWER ICAS
PO Box 14043
Birmingham
B6 9BL

Tel: 0300 456 2370
Minicom: 0300 456 2364 Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

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Help us get it right

We constantly try to improve the service we offer.

Please let us know when you think we have done something well or if you have any suggestions as to how we can do something better.