



**CUCKFIELD MEDICAL PRACTICE
& THE VALE SURGERY**

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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CUCKFIELD MEDICAL PRACTICE & THE VALE SURGERY

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Cuckfield Medical Practice is committed to achieving the highest standards of care for all its patients, service users and their representatives. If mistakes do occur we need to put them right and prevent them from happening again. We can only do this if you tell us if something is not right. This policy explains the procedure we will follow where a complaint is made about our services. Complaints are an important part of the feedback process and help us maintain and improve our standards. We also welcome positive comment and constructive suggestions which are just as important.

1.0 NHS COMPLAINTS REGULATIONS

We are required to follow the requirements of the **Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009**. Our Complaints Policy complies with and exceeds the minimum standards set out in these Regulations. Information about accessing the Regulations and contact details are shown on page three. The Regulations require us to appoint a Responsible Person to take overall responsibility for complaints and a Complaints Manager to manage the procedure.

2.0 WHO IS ENTITLED TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You may make a complaint under NHS Regulations if you are unhappy or concerned about any aspect of our services. We will follow the procedures described below if you:

2.1 Receive or have previously received medical services from us or;

2.2 Are someone affected by something we have done or have failed to do, or;

2.3 **Are a representative of someone described above who:**

2.3.1 has died, or

2.3.2 is a child or

2.3.3 cannot complain themselves because of:

a. a physical or mental incapacity or

b. has asked you to act on your behalf

2.4 **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.

3.0 WHEN TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

- 3.1** You can raise a complaint under this procedure at any time up to 12 months after either the matter you wish to complain about occurred or 12 months after it came to your notice.
- 3.2** If your complaint is made after more than 12 months we will still investigate if there is good reason why the complaint was not made earlier and if it is still possible to investigate the matter fairly.
- 3.3** It is usually easier to resolve a problem if it is reported immediately after it occurs. Delay may make the investigation difficult.

4.0 HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

4.1 You can report concerns or complaints in any of the following ways:

- 4.1.1 Talk to a doctor, nurse, a member of the administration team or the Practice Manager;
- 4.1.2 Write to or email our Practice Manager;
- 4.1.3 Alternatively, you may raise your complaint directly with NHS England.

- 4.2** If you feel that you need help in setting out your complaint you can ask for advocacy help. See page 3 for details of the resources available to help you.

5.0 IF YOU SPEAK TO US ABOUT A COMPLAINT

Our aim, where possible, is to resolve it orally within one working day. We will discuss the matter with you in person or by telephone. We will then write to you or, if you prefer, email you to confirm what we have said and how the matter has been resolved.

6.0 HOW WE WILL HANDLE YOUR COMPLAINT

6.1 Investigation and handling of complaints is supervised by our Practice Manager whose job is to:

- 6.1.1 record the complaint and decide how best to handle it
- 6.1.2 investigate or arrange for someone else appropriate to investigate
- 6.1.3 keep in touch with you about the progress of the investigation
- 6.1.4 report to you on the result of the investigation
- 6.1.5 consider, with staff and managers, what we need to do to put matters right
- 6.1.6 see what lessons we can learn for the future

- 6.2** You may contact the Practice Manager by phone, letter or email.

- 6.3** How we handle your complaint depends on how it is received and on your own preferences.

7.0 IF YOU PUT YOUR COMPLAINT IN WRITING

- 7.1** We will aim to reply within three working days acknowledging your complaint and stating how we propose to handle to the matter and the expected timescale.
- 7.2** All complaints are thoroughly investigated to ensure that we reach a clear understanding of what has happened. The investigation is carried out by someone not directly involved to ensure fairness.
- 7.3** Where possible we will try to speak to you personally rather than rely on what you write. Talking about a problem can help us reach a better understanding of the complaint and how you have been affected.
- 7.4** We will aim to complete our investigation and report to you promptly. Most complaints can be resolved within a few days, but should we need more time we will regularly keep you informed of progress. We are required under the Regulations to write to you with our findings within six months of receiving your complaint. However, we would require this period of time only rarely and for the most serious complaints.
- 7.5** When we have completed the investigation we will write to you setting out our findings. Where appropriate we will make proposals for putting the matter right. We will also tell you the steps we will introduce to prevent the problem from occurring again.

8.0 IF YOU DO NOT ACCEPT OUR CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 If you do not accept the conclusions in our response the following options are available:**
- 8.1.1** Write to us explaining why you disagree. We will then arrange for a review of the findings to be carried out either by another senior staff member or by an external expert. We will follow the principles above as regards communication with you during this review. If you are still not satisfied with our conclusions you may appeal to the Health Service Ombudsman.
- 8.1.2** If you do not wish to use our internal review option or if you agree to an internal review but are not happy with the outcome you may pass your complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman.

9.0 CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

To submit a complaint or request an internal review of a decision in writing or by email

Mrs Jess Yaxley
The Practice Manager
Cuckfield and The Vale Medical Practice
Glebe Road
Cuckfield
West Sussex
RH17 5BQ

Tel: 01444 458738/458739
Email: cuckfield.reception@nhs.net

To make a comment or raise a concern with NHS England about services you have received

NHS England
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT

Tel: 0800 783 5208
Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

To obtain free, independent advice and support in making your complaint

Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote
SEAP Hastings
Upper Ground Floor
Aquila House
Breeds Place
Hastings TN34 3UY

Tel: 0330 440 9000
Email: info@seap.org.uk
Fax: 01424 204687
Website: <http://www.seap.org.uk/>

To appeal a decision on a complaint

The Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033
Fax: 0300 061 4000
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

10.0 MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NHS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

- 10.1 Information about the NHS Complaints procedure is available from:
<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints/Pages/NHScomplaints.aspx>
- 10.2 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009 that we are required to follow can be accessed at:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20090309_en_1