

## **Listening, Responding and Improving at Whitstable Medical Practice**

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In order to provide our patients with the best possible care, we would like to hear from you if you think we have done something well or if you feel we could do something differently. Furthermore, we understand that there may be times that you are unhappy with the service received at the practice, and we would like to hear about this too.

### **Giving us your feedback**

If you have any comments, compliments or suggestions please speak initially to the receptionist on duty who will be able to advise you. You can also post a message in the suggestions box at each site.

### **Patient User Group**

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We also welcome your ideas and concerns through our Patient User Group, a group of volunteers who contribute their views on services provided by the Practice.

To join our Patient User Group please enquire at reception for an application form.

### **If we fail to meet your expectations**

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If you have a complaint please do not be afraid to say how you feel. We welcome feedback to improve our standards and you will not be treated any differently if you have complained.

We will do our best to put right anything that has gone wrong and this leaflet aims to help you to make your views known to us.

Complaints can be made by patients on their own behalf or by a representative (with your consent).

If you wish to make a complaint you should do so as soon as you can, whilst you remember the details clearly.

Usually the NHS Complaints Procedures only deal with complaints made within 12 months of the event or discovering something to complain about. This time limit may be waived if there are good reasons why you could not let us know earlier.

In order to make a complaint, please put your feedback in writing, addressed to the Practice Manager.

### **What happens next?**

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The Practice Manager will acknowledge your complaint and make contact within three days to discuss the way forward.

Confidentiality will be respected at all times and a patient's consent will be sought where complaints are made by anybody other than the patients themselves.

The Practice Manager will undertake a thorough investigation of events and seek to address all aspects of a patient's complaint; taking advice and where beneficial, arranging meetings with the complainant.

Where appropriate the practice will invite and cooperate with agencies such as the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), Healthcare Resolutions or the Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service (ICAS) in order to achieve a local resolution.

Every effort will be made to keep the complainant informed of progress and for a final response to be sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale.

The Practice Manager will keep a record of all complaints received together with details of timescales and outcomes. The information will help contribute to the identification of staff training needs and service improvements as well as

forming part of the practice's Annual Report on Complaints.

### **Breakdown of Doctor/Patient Relationship**

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If at any time you feel that there is a breakdown of the doctor/patient relationship and you wish to discuss this with someone, please contact the Practice Manager.

The GPs at the Practice appreciate that there may be situations when it might be better for both the patient and the GP if patients register with a different doctor. Please do not hesitate to speak to the Supervisor at Reception or the Practice Manager so that arrangements for a transfer can be made.

Requesting a different GP will in no way affect the future care of the patient or the services they receive. However, doctors usually like to be made aware of such requests, so they can reflect on the reasons why the request has been made in order to develop their communication, consultation and clinical skills where necessary.

### **What other options do I have?**

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Complaints can be directed to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) rather than the practice and they may undertake the complaint handling. In some cases, with your consent they will refer the complaint back to the practice. With your consent, the PCT is obliged to notify the practice about any complaints it receives.

Where other organisations such as hospitals are involved in the complaint, we will aim to provide you with a co-ordinated response covering all aspects of your complaint. Where a complaint is solely about a third party, we may seek your agreement to pass the complaint to them.

## Who can help with your complaint?

The following contacts can help you further with any questions you may still have about the complaints procedure within the NHS:

### **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) may be able to help you resolve the matter promptly or point you in the right direction.

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service**  
**Oaten Hill Court, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3HS**  
**Tel: 0800 085 6606**  
**Email: [pals@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@eastcoastkent.nhs.uk)**

### **ICAS**

The Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service (ICAS) is available to support you and represent your views when making a complaint—they can accompany you to meetings to discuss your complaint and provide support or an interpreter.

**Independent Complaints Advocacy Service**  
**Ground Floor 7 Vale Avenue**  
**Tunbridge Wells TN1 1DJ**  
**Tel: 01892 540490**  
**Email: [tunbridgew.icas@seap.org.uk](mailto:tunbridgew.icas@seap.org.uk)**

### **PCT**

If you wish to pass your complaint to your local Primary Care Trust please contact

**Complaints Manager**  
**Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT**  
**Trust Headquarters**  
**Brook House, John Wilson Business Park**  
**Chestfield, Whitstable CT5 3QT**  
**Tel: 0800 085 6606**  
**Email: [easterncoastalkentcomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:easterncoastalkentcomplaints@nhs.net)**

## **The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman:**

If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the Practice then you have the right to refer your complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman. They would require a clear statement of what issues remain outstanding.

**Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**  
**Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP**  
**Tel: 0345 015 4033**  
**Email: [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)**

Whitstable Medical Practice recognises that patients who complain about care or treatment received have every right to expect a prompt, open, constructive and honest response including an explanation and, if appropriate, an apology.

We understand the importance of listening to patients and making changes when things have not gone as they (or we) would wish.

Whitstable Medical Practice works from three surgeries:

Estuary View Medical Centre, Whitstable Health Centre and Chestfield Medical Centre.

Please address any complaints to:

**The Practice Manager**  
**Estuary View Medical Centre**  
**Estuary View Business Park**  
**Boorman Way**  
**Whitstable**  
**CT5 3SE**



# Compliments Comments and Complaints

**A brief guide on how to voice  
your appreciation or concerns**