



# WHITSTABLE MEDICAL PRACTICE

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy is concerned with formal complaints defined as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction from a patient or their duly authorised representative, or any person who is affected by or likely to be affected by the action, omission or decision of the Practice, whether justified or not.”

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

### **Aims:**

To ensure all complaints receive thorough and timely investigation and a detailed response aimed at resolving issues to the satisfaction of all parties.

To communicate effectively with the complainant, agreeing a way forward for handling their complaint and meeting agreed timescales.

To ensure patients' concerns are heard and acted upon and to encourage and train front line staff to take an active role in resolving issues but where appropriate to refer matters to the Complaints Manager (Patient Safety and Quality Manager) in a timely manner.

To view patient complaints seriously, identify trends and apply learning to improve the services for the benefit of all patients.

### **Scope:**

Complaints will be investigated if they are made within 12 months of the event(s) concerned or within 12 months of there being a discovery that there was a cause for complaint.

The complaints process will be managed by the Patient Safety and Quality Manager under the Practice's Complaints Procedure in accordance with NHS Complaints Regulations.

Where a complaint also identifies issues with another organisation (e.g. a hospital department) the practice will liaise with that organisation in order to respond to all aspects of the complaint. Where the complaint only relates to that organisation, the practice will seek permission from the patient to pass the complaint to that organisation for a response.

If a patient asks NHS England to investigate their complaint about the Practice, they should seek their consent to contact the practice for a response to concerns; this will in turn be sent back to NHS England to allow them to formulate a full response to the patient.

### **Procedure:**

All complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt and agreement reached with the complainant about the expected time scale and outcome of the investigation.

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

The Patient Safety and Quality 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 co-operate with agencies such as NHS England, Healthcare Resolutions or ICAS in order to achieve a local resolution.

The Practice will ensure that links are established with Social Services and other agencies to ensure a seamless response to complaints.

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

The Patient Safety and Quality Manager will keep a record of all complaints received together with details of timescales and outcomes. The information will contribute to the identification of service improvements and staff training needs as well as forming part of the Practice's Annual Report on Complaints.

If once all investigations are complete and the complainant remains dissatisfied they will be advised of their right to request a review by the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman.

Responsible for review: Patient Safety and Quality Manager