Oakfield Health Centre

Complaints Policy

Document Control

A. Confidentiality Notice

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B. Document details

Policy Relevant to	All staff
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C. Document Revision and Approval History

Version	Date	Version Created By:	Version Approved By:	Comments
1	26.07.2022	Denise Payne	Dr Rubin Minhas	
1	15/10/2024	AN for Emma Gale	Dr Rubin Minhas	Reviewed
1	19/09/2025	Alice Newman	Dr Rubin Minhas	Reviewed, no changes made
1	23/10/2026	Alice Newman	Dr Rubin Minhas	Reviewed
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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 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided that is within 12 months of the incident.

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 writing** – some complaints may be easier to explain in writing – please give as much information as can, then send your complaint to the practice for the attention of the Practice Manager as soon as possible.
- Via Email to oakfield.practice@nhs.net for the attention of The Management Team.

What we shall do:

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

We shall acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within 20 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 would like this
- 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.

Complaining on behalf of someone else:

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, we must obtain their permission before we can discuss or investigate the complaint. This is to ensure that we have the appropriate consent to share confidential patient information.

Our Administration Team will send a consent form directly to the patient for them to complete, sign and return. The completed consent form must be received within **14 working days** of being issued.

Please be aware of the following:

- We cannot commence an investigation or discuss confidential patient information relating to the complaint until the patient's signed consent has been received.
- If the completed consent form is not returned within 14 working days, the complaint will be considered closed. The complaint record will be updated to show **'Closed – No Consent Received'**.
- If the signed consent form is received within the 14-working-day period, the complaint investigation timescale will begin from the date the completed consent is received.
- We will aim to investigate and respond to the complaint within **20 working days from the date consent is received**.

If the patient is unable to provide consent themselves, for example due to illness or incapacity, we will consider the circumstances and any appropriate alternative arrangements in line with confidentiality requirements.

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.

However this does not affect your right to approach NHS England Kent & Medway if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the way we are dealing with your complaint. The Customer Services and Patient Advice Service based at Darent

Valley Hospital provide confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available from the NHS. To contact them you can telephone 01322 428382, email pals@dvh.nhs.uk.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, then you have the right to refer your complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman, by writing to Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP. They can also be contacted on helpline 0345 015 4033, www.ombudsman.org.uk or by email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk. They would require a clear statement of what issues remained outstanding.

However, before considering taking this step, we hope you would let us know what aspect of the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily and provide an opportunity for us to consider whether there is anything further that could be done locally to resolve matters.

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.