

THE ELMS MEDICAL PRACTICE

Complaints Procedure

The Elms Medical Practice is always looking for ways to improve the services provided for our patients. Our aim is to ensure the highest level of care and service to all our patients at all times. We know that we do not always achieve this.

If you have a complaint or concern about any aspect of the service you have received from the Practice or any person who works at the practice (clinical or non-clinical) **please let us know**.

The Practice operates a complaints procedure for dealing with complaints which meets national criteria as laid down by the NHS.

To effect lasting improvement the Practice needs to know your problems, views and experiences. **Only by listening to you and acting constructively together can we achieve positive change.**

Our commitment to you

We will **acknowledge** your complaint **within three working days** and aim to have investigated your complaint within a reasonable timescale. Naturally the time taken to investigate your complaint will vary and depend upon its complexity and the number of people concerned. We shall then be in a position to provide you with as full a written response as possible. It may also be appropriate to have a face to face meeting.

When we look into your complaint we aim to:

- Find out what happened and what should have happened.
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned if this is your wish.
- Ensure the complaint is resolved to your satisfaction if possible.
- Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate.
- Identify what needs to be done to ensure the problem does not arise again.

Our principles are

- To get it right.
- To be patient focused.
- To be open and accountable.
- To act fairly and proportionately.
- To put it right.
- To seek continuous improvement.
- To never discriminate against the complainant.

How to Complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly. Often we can resolve them at the time they arise and directly with the person concerned.

However, we realise that this is not always the case: If your problem cannot be resolved easily and you wish to complain **please let us know as soon as possible**. This will enable us to establish what happened more easily and provide the necessary response.

You can make your complaint as follows:-

- In person or by telephone (please ask to speak to The Practice General Manager 01634 250142).
- Visit our website and complete the Complaints Form online
<https://www.elmsmedicalkent.nhs.uk/making-a-complaint>
- In writing: The Practice General Manager, The Elms Medical Practice, Tilley Close, Hoo, Kent, ME3 9AE

We aim to try and resolve any complaints to your satisfaction using the Practice-based Complaints procedure as we believe that this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong.

However, under the NHS Complaints Regulations 2008 you are entitled to contact NHS Kent and Medway Patient Experience Team.

Telephone: 01634 335095, Option 7

Email: kmicb.patientexperience@nhs.net

Address: Patient Experience Team, 2nd Floor, Gail House, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6NB

The Patient Experience Team is available from 8am to 4pm, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, and will aim to respond as soon as possible within three working days. Each complaint that is received will receive an acknowledgement within three working days.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

The Practice adheres strictly to the rules governing **patient medical confidentiality**. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, the Practice must have a note or letter signed by the person concerned, **providing their consent** to enable further discussion with the appointed third party.

If the patient concerned is unable to provide their consent for whatever reason it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in the covering letter.

What to do if you remain dissatisfied

If at the end of the practice-based complaints procedure you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to ask the **Health Service Ombudsmen** to review your complaint.

The Ombudsman has powers set down by law and helps to resolve complaints about the NHS.

Health Service Ombudsman

This is a free service but only available after the NHS has had a chance to investigate and try to resolve the complaint.

If you decide to contact the Ombudsman, you should do this as soon as possible after you have exhausted the Practice procedure.

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0345 015 4033 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm | Friday 8:30am to 12pm)