



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your care or service, please let us know as soon as possible. We operate an In-House Practice Complaints Procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

How to complain?

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise. 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. Complaints should be addressed to Miss Fiona Pickering, our Practice Manager. We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days, either verbally or in writing and offer to discuss the matter. We will include in the discussion, how the complaint will be handled and the likely period for completion of the investigation and responding to you. We will send a written response as soon as reasonably practicable after completing the investigation, which will include:

- an explanation of how the complaint has been considered;
- the conclusions reached;
- including any matters for which remedial action is needed; and confirmation that these will be achieved;
- details of your right to take this complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman;
- The practice will maintain a complete record of all complaints and copies of all related correspondence. These records will be kept separately from patients' medical records.

All complaints will be treated in strict confidence. Patients who make a complaint will not be discriminated against or be subject to any negative effect on their care, treatment or support.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

You can also make a complaint on someone else's behalf (e.g. an elderly relative) if they are unable to, but you must have their written permission.

Receipt and acknowledgement of complaints

The practice may receive the following complaints:

- A complaint made directly by the patient or former patient, who is receiving or has received treatment at the practice;
- A complaint made on behalf of a patient or former patient (with his/her consent), who is receiving or has received treatment at the practice;
- Where the patient is a child:
 - By either parent, or in the absence of both parents, the guardian or other adult who has care of the child;
 - By a person duly authorised by a Local Authority into whose care the child has been committed under the provisions of the Children Act 1989;
 - By a person duly authorised by a voluntary organisation, by which the child is being accommodated.
- Where the patient is incapable of making a complaint, by a representative who has an interest in his/her welfare;



- All complaints, whether written or verbal will be recorded by Fiona Pickering or Karen Cuddy using a Complaints Form and a dedicated complaints record will be started;
- All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt;
- If the practice identifies that the complaint will involve an additional provider, it will agree with that provider which organisation will take the lead in responding and communicating with the complainant.

Periods of time within which complaints can be made

The periods of time within which a complaint can be made is normally:

- 12 months from the date on which the event / incident which is the subject of the complaint occurred; or
- 12 months from the date on which the event / incident which is the subject of the complaint comes to the complainant's notice.

Handling Unreasonable Complaints

- In situations where the person making the complaint can become aggressive or unreasonable, the practice will instigate the appropriate actions from the list below and will advise the complainant accordingly:
 - Ensure contact is being overseen by an appropriate senior member of staff, who will act as the single point of contact and make it clear to the complainant that other members of staff will be unable to help them;
 - Ask that they make contact in only one way, appropriate to their needs (e.g. in writing);
 - Place a time limit on any contact;
 - Restrict the number of calls or meetings during a specified period;
 - Ensure that a witness will be involved in each contact;
 - Refuse to register repeated complaints about the same issue;
 - Will not respond to correspondence regarding a matter that has already been closed, only acknowledge it;
 - Explain that The Harvey Practice will not respond to correspondence that is abusive;
 - Make contact through a third person such as a specialist advocate;
 - Ask the complainant to agree how they will behave when dealing with your service in the future;
 - Return any irrelevant documentation and remind them that it will not be returned again;
 - When using any of these approaches to manage contact with unreasonable or aggressive people, provide an explanation of what is occurring and why;
 - Maintain a detailed record of each contact during the ongoing relationship.

Complaints Register

To ensure the practice monitors, handles and reviews complaints in a logical and timely manner, and to keep an audit trail of steps taken and decisions reached, the practice records all complaints received on a dedicated complaints matrix which is maintained by Fiona Pickering and Clare Troke



Annual Review of Complaints

- In line with National Guidance, the Practice will supply information to the relevant health authority including:
 - The number of complaints received.
 - The subject of the complaints;
 - Whether complaints have been upheld and details of any actions taken;
 - The number of cases referred to the Ombudsman.

NHS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We hope that if you have a problem you will use our In-house Complaints Procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice.

You may choose to make your complaint verbally, in writing or electronically to NHS England rather than the Practice to:

NHS Dorset

NHS Dorset,
Vespasian House, Barrack Road, Dorchester, DT1 1TG

Direct tel: 01305 368926

Email: customer.careteam@nhsdoret.nhs.uk

Under the NHS Complaints Procedure, complaints are usually investigated only if they are made within 12 months of the event, or within 12 months of you realising that you have something to complain about. However, this 12-month limit does not apply if there were good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit, or despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate matters effectively and fairly.

There are two stages to the NHS Complaints Procedure:

- **1st stage** - local resolution, either by the Harvey Practice – or NHS England.
- **2nd stage** – Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP.
Tel: 0345 015 4033.
e-mail: phso.enquiries@ombudssman.org.uk
Website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk>

At the Harvey Practice we try to ensure that all patients are pleased with their experience of our service and we take complaints very seriously. If you need to complain, you will be dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.

We learn from every mistake that we make and we attempt to respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

Please note: Our In-house Practice Complaints Procedure does not deal with matters of legal liability or compensation.



Support For Complainants

Help for a complainant is also available from.

Dorset Advocacy Service which provides an informal point of contact for queries, concerns or further information on how to take your complaint forward.

The Dorset Advocacy Service is based at:

Health Watch Dorset, Freepost BH1902

The Bridge

Chaseside

Bournemouth

BH7 8BX

www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk

0300 111 0102

The Advocacy People (whole of Dorset)

Tel: 0330 440 9000

Email: info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk

Website: www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk/nhs-complaints-advocacy

Under the NHS Complaints Procedure, complaints are usually investigated only if they are made within 12 months of the event, or within 12 months of you realising that you have something to complain about. However, this 12-month limit does not apply if there were good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit, or despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate matters effectively and fairly.

There are two stages to the NHS Complaints Procedure:

- **1st stage** - local resolution, either by the Harvey Practice – or NHS England.
- **2nd stage** – Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP.
Tel: 0345 015 4033.
e-mail: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk>

At the Harvey Practice we try to ensure that all patients are pleased with their experience of our service and we take complaints very seriously. If you need to complain, you will be dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.

We learn from every mistake that we make and we attempt to respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

Please note: Our In-house Practice Complaints Procedure does not deal with matters of legal liability or compensation.

Updated 16.11.2023

For Review 15.11.2025