



## DUNELM MEDICAL PRACTICE

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### DOCUMENT CONTROL

##### A. CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This document and the information contained therein is the property of Dunelm Medical Practice.

This document contains information that is privileged, confidential or otherwise protected from disclosure. It must not be used by, or its contents reproduced or otherwise copied or disclosed without the prior consent in writing from Dunelm Medical Practice.

##### B. DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Classification:</b>	Approved
<b>Author and Role:</b>	SMG, Information and Quality Manager
<b>Organisation:</b>	Dunelm Medical Practice
<b>Document Reference:</b>	
<b>Current Version Number:</b>	2.0
<b>Current Document Approved By:</b>	H Collier
<b>Date Approved:</b>	01.05.2015

##### C. DOCUMENT REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Version	Date	Version Created By:	Version Approved By:	Comments
1.0	1.10.2015	S Greenwood	H Collier	Upload to GP TeamNet / practice Website
2.0	2.05.2017	H Collier	H Collier	Upload to GP TeamNet / Practice Website



## Dunelm Medical Practice

### Complaints Procedure

The aim of the NHS Complaints Procedure is to resolve issues at a local level. If at the end of the process of 'local resolution' you don't feel your complaint has been resolved satisfactorily you have the right to go to the Health Service Ombudsman. As a general rule the Ombudsman will only accept a case after local resolution has been completed.

#### **Stage 1: Local Resolution**

#### **Stage 2: The Health Service Ombudsman**

#### **Stage 1: Local resolution**

Local Resolution is your opportunity to explain what you are unhappy about and what you would like to happen. It gives you and the NHS organisation time to discuss the incident.

Local Resolution is important because it aims to resolve your concerns and, where appropriate, use your experiences to improve local services.

The process begins when you first tell the people responsible for the service you are unhappy about that you want to complain. The aim is to sort out your problem directly with the NHS organisation. The NHS aims to respond to you efficiently, sensitively and promptly.

As a general rule, you should make your complaint within 12 months of the incident or within 12 months of realising that you have something to complain about. However, the NHS can use its discretion if particular circumstances prevent you from complaining in good time.

#### **Who do I complain to?**

The aim of the NHS Complaints Procedure is to resolve issues at a local level. If at the end of If you want to complain about your hospital or ambulance service, contact the complaints manager or the Chief Executive of the NHS Trust.

For complaints about primary care and independent providers such as your GP, dentist, optician, pharmacist, health centre or other independent NHS contractor, you have one option:

**You can complain directly to the NHS organisation by contacting the person in charge of complaints. In most GP and dental practices, this will be the practice manager. In the case of Dunelm Medical Practice it is our Operational Manager.**

If your complaint concerns more than one NHS organisation, you need only send a letter to one of the organisations. They will liaise with the other organisation(s) involved and provide a co-ordinated response.

We prefer receiving complaints in writing. If you would rather telephone or have a meeting, the practice manager should make a written record of your complaint and you should be given a copy.

It is important to raise everything that concerns you at this stage, as new issues cannot be introduced at a later stage of the process. If your complaint is not resolved at this stage and you want to take it further, whatever you have raised here will be referred to later.

It may be helpful to keep a record of any phone calls and letters.

### **Complaining on behalf of someone else**

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have his or her permission to do so. Signed consent by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

### **What happens next?**

When the investigation is complete, the complaints manager should send you a letter signed by the Practice's 'responsible person' or someone authorised to act on their behalf.

#### **This letter should contain:**

- a summary of your complaint
- what the investigation found and any actions that are going to be taken as a result
- what to do if you are still unhappy with the answers given.

#### **Depending on the Practice's investigation, the letter may contain:**

- an apology, if relevant
- what will be done, by when
- who is responsible for making this happen
- what steps have been taken to prevent the same thing happening to other people.

The letter should be balanced, factual and impartial, as well as clear and easy to understand.

If you haven't received this letter within the timescale agreed in the plan you may want to check when you can expect to receive it. If you haven't received a response letter within six months of your original complaint and the Practice hasn't agreed an extension they should write to you explaining the reason for the delay. The final response must then be sent as soon as reasonably practicable.

This is the end of the first stage of the NHS Complaints Procedure.

---

### **What if I am not happy at the end of Local Resolution?**

If you are not satisfied with the reply you have been given, ask yourself exactly what you are unhappy about so you can decide what to do next.

#### **It may help to review:**

- any letters and meetings
- any conciliation or mediation process
- whether the plan you agreed was followed
- whether parts of your complaint have yet to be answered
- whether you feel evidence you gave was not properly considered
- what more could have been done to achieve your desired outcome
- whether the complaints manager has followed the Ombudsman's good complaints handling principles.

### **What are my options?**

- you can write another letter explaining what you think has not been covered
- you can call the person handling your complaint and explain why you are still unhappy
- you can request a meeting to discuss your outstanding concerns
- you can refer your concerns to the Health Service Ombudsman.

Further investigation into your complaint may be carried out. Again, the NHS organisation should discuss this with you and agree a plan, including timescales.

The NHS organisation you are complaining about may feel that everything has been done to answer your complaint and if so, they should inform you in writing.

### **NHS Complaints Procedure Stage 2**

#### **Stage 2: The Health Service Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman is independent of the NHS and Government. The Ombudsman's services are confidential and free.

You should submit a complaint no later than 12 months from the date of the events you are complaining about (or from when you first became aware of the matter), although the Ombudsman can extend this time limit if, for example, the local resolution process took longer than a year.

The Ombudsman will look at every complaint but is not required to investigate them all. They will not normally investigate your case unless you have already tried local resolution.

The Ombudsman can refer you back to local resolution if they think you have come to them too soon, or if they feel that the NHS organisation involved has not done all it could to resolve your issues locally.

#### **The Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint if:**

- you do not agree with a decision made by your NHS provider but cannot offer any evidence as to why their decision is wrong or unsatisfactory
- they decide that there is no evidence to suggest that the NHS provider acted wrongly
- they decide that the NHS provider or practitioner has done all that they reasonably could to put things right
- they decide that there would not be a worthwhile outcome from an investigation (for example, if the solution sought by the complainant is not obtainable).

Initially, a member of the Ombudsman's staff will consider whether your case meets the Ombudsman's criteria for investigation. To carry out this assessment they may need to see clinical records and other documentation. A member of the Ombudsman's staff will contact you to ask for any papers they need and will write to you to let you know the outcome.

#### **If you take your complaint to the Ombudsman, there are three main outcomes:**

The Ombudsman may decide not to investigate the case and take no further action (for example, if they think that the NHS has done all it can to resolve your complaint locally)

The Ombudsman may decide not to investigate the case but ask the NHS provider or practitioner to take action which they think would resolve your complaint more quickly. This is called an 'intervention.'

The Ombudsman may decide to carry out an in-depth investigation resulting in a detailed report. The investigation will be very thorough and can take some time. The Ombudsman aims to complete 90% of investigations within 12 months of accepting the case for investigation.

**If your complaint is investigated:**

If the Ombudsman carries out an investigation they will write a detailed report. If your complaint is upheld, the Ombudsman can make recommendations to the NHS provider or practitioner to put things right.

All the Ombudsman's decisions are final. This includes the decision about whether or not to investigate your complaint and the decision about whether or not your complaint should be upheld.

Policy Date May 2015  
Review Date May 2017

Updated: May 2017  
Review Date: May 2018