

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy follows the 2009 regulations to provide clear access to feedback and formal complaints on the quality of our service.

You have

- The right to have any complaint you make about our service dealt with efficiently and to have it properly investigated.
- The right to know the outcome of the complaint.
- The right to take your complaint to the independent Health Service Ombudsman, if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled it.

A complaint should be made within 12 months of the event or of the complainant knowing they had cause to complain.

We will

- Not discriminate when complaints are made. As a patient you have every right to voice a concern or dissatisfaction with our service. By doing so we want to stress that your medical care will not be affected. This is in accordance with GMP paragraph 61.
- Act appropriately on any concern.

Oral complaints (not resolved within 24 hours) will be written up and shared with complainant to agree content.

Complaint or Feedback?

There are two ways to express your dissatisfaction:

- Feedback
- Complaint

Within our first response to your concern we will ask 'Are you making a formal complaint?'

Feedback

An informal form of complaint, taken no less seriously. It will be investigated and a response will be given to you. If we feel that the complaint is more serious we will escalate it to a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

Formal complaints can be made to our Deputy Complaints Manager Emma Szepesi. This can be either verbally, or preferably written.

You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 3 days, outlining a summary of your complaint and a time frame in which we predict we are able to fully investigate and send a response to you. You will be asked to either accept or not accept this time frame.

Formal complaints can either be sent to our complaints manager or to NHS England. You are unable to send the same to complaint to both, either at the same time, or after one has dealt with it.

We are unable to deal with questions of legal liability or compensation, but we hope you will allow us to look into and, if necessary, put right any problems you have identified or mistakes that have been made.

Multi-Agency Complaints

Where more than one health or social care organisation is complained about, there is a duty of care to co-operate to produce a coordinated response. Consent will be sought from the complainant to approach other organisations involved.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

We have to respect our duty of confidentiality to all patients, we must contact the patient before starting the process to gain consent, unless it is established that the patient is incapable of providing consent.

How to complain

If you wish to discuss a complaint or concern, please phone or preferably write to our Complaints Manager who will take full details of the nature of your complaint or concern. We will respond within 3 working days, either verbally or in writing, we welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss matters further.

Occasionally, if we have to make a lot of enquiries it might take longer to investigate, but we will keep you informed. You may bring a friend or relative with you to a planned meeting.

In the absence of the Complaints Manager the Deputy, Emma Szepesi will respond and investigate your complaint.

We will try to address your concerns fully, provide you with an explanation and discuss any action that may be needed. We hope that, at the end of any discussion or meeting, you will feel satisfied that we have listened to you and dealt with the matter thoroughly and examined if the matter could have been handled differently to prevent the situation arising in the future.

Complaining about attached staff or the Out of Hours Service

Please contact the Deputy Complaints Manager, who will provide names, addresses and contact numbers for the most appropriate person for you to contact.

Our aim is to listen, respond and improve our services to provide quality patient care.

However, if you are not satisfied with the response, you have the right to take your complaint to the commissioner of the service. This is the organisation that paid for the service or care received, in this instance NHS Sussex. From 6 January 2025 if people want to make a complaint about primary care services to the commissioner, people can contact the NHS Sussex Complaints team via contact details below:

- Phone: 0300 140 9854 (excluding weekends and bank holidays)
- Email: sxicb.complaints@nhs.net
- Post: NHS Sussex, Sackville House, Brooks Close, Lewes BN7 2FZ

Each complaint that is received will receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch is the name of the newly formed consumer champion for health and social care. At a local level, Healthwatch will work to help people get the best out of their health and social care services, providing them with advice and information on local services.

You can contact Healthwatch West Sussex by calling: 0300 012 0122

Or following the following link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/nhs-and-social-care-complaints/nhs-complaints-who-is-your-complaint-against/complaints-about-gps/>

You can also contact The Witterings Area Patient Participation Group
Email: contact@wittppg.co.uk

If you wish to proceed with a complaint please return it to:

The Deputy Complaints Manager

Witterings Medical Centre

Cakeham Road

East Wittering,

PO20 8BH

Email: reception.witterings@nhs.net