

## Complaints Procedure

### Overview of the Complaints Process

1. Please see if you can resolve your issue with practice verbally (practice to resolve within 24 hours). Please ask to speak to the Office Manager at Blackbrook Surgery (Amanda Kimber).
2. If you are unable to obtain satisfaction under 1 above or if you prefer not to discuss the issue with us, proceed to making a formal complaint. (You can do this verbally, in writing or electronically).
3. You can complain to the Practice or alternatively to NHS England.
4. There are some exclusions and time limits.
5. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days.
6. We will investigate your complaint as quickly as possible and give you the outcome in writing.
7. If you are unhappy with the outcome you can refer your complaint to a higher authority.

### 1. Introduction

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or staff working at Taunton Vale Healthcare, you are entitled to ask for an explanation. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints.

Our complaints system meets national criteria (Local Resolution under NHS and Social Care Complaints Procedure governed by The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service complaints (England) Regulations 2009.)

We try to distinguish between 'grumbles and **complaints**'. Our receptionists can normally deal with grumbles and other minor matters quickly and efficiently, often at the time they arise. Our Office Manager can also assist you in trying to resolve any problems on an informal basis.

### 2. Local Resolution

If you have a complaint about our services we will try to resolve this with you in the practice. Eleanor Morley at Taunton Vale Healthcare is the staff member nominated to handle complaints. Arrangements are in place to handle any complaints that are received in her absence.

In the first instance, the practice would welcome the opportunity to try and resolve your complaint. Under local resolution you are able to complain to the organisation responsible for commissioning the services provided by the practice. This is NHS England.



If you complain about the practice to NHS England, there are two alternative options

**Option A** NHS England decides that it can handle the complaint. NHS England must seek your consent to send the details of your complaint to the practice. This is to enable them to obtain any relevant information from the practice.

**Option B** NHS England may consider that it is more appropriate for the practice to answer the complaint, in which case it must seek your consent to ask the practice to investigate and respond.

**Important** You must choose at the outset whether to make your complaint to the practice or to NHS England. If you make your initial complaint to the practice and do not agree with our response you cannot then seek a review from NHS England. You do have the right to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman.

### 3. How to complain

You can complain in 2 ways:

- Verbally – face to face or by telephone:
  - Contact the Office Manager at Blackbrook Surgery (Amanda Kimber).
- In writing to:
  - Eleanor Morley, Management Support to the Partners, Taunton Vale Healthcare, Lisieux Way, Taunton, TA1 2LB

A complaint form is included at the end of this information. If you are complaining in writing, please feel free to use the form. Alternatively, a letter is equally fine.

#### Verbal complaints resolved within 24 hours

It may be possible to resolve simple oral complaint within 24 hours and wherever possible the practice will seek to do this for you. Complaints dealt with in this way fall outside the regulations.

#### All other complaints

All other complaints are governed by the regulations and will result in a formal written response being made to you.

#### **4. Complaining on behalf of somebody 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. A signed note by the person concerned will be needed.

In certain circumstances, the regulations impose a duty upon the practice to satisfy us that the representative is an appropriate person to make a complaint.

#### **5. Exclusions**

The Complaints Procedure excludes:

- Complaints that were first made verbally and which were resolved to the complainants satisfaction within one working day
- Complaints about the same subject matter as a complaint that has previously been made and resolved
- Complaints alleging failure by the practice to comply with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

#### **6. Time Limits**

A complaint should be made within 12 months from the date on which the matter occurred or from when the matter came to the attention of the complainant

A complaint may be considered outside the time limit if the complainant has good reason for not making the complaint within the limit. The practice will also consider whether it is still possible to investigate the complaint fairly and effectively.

#### **7. How will we handle your complaint?**

- We will record the date we received your complaint and acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days
- We will offer you the opportunity to discuss your complaint via telephone or a face to face meeting
- Your complaint will be promptly investigated
- We will advise you of the outcome of the investigation in writing
- We will take any necessary action in light of the outcome of the complaint.



During the complaints process you will be treated with respect and courtesy and if required we will help you so far as is reasonably practical to understand our procedures and advise on where you may be able to obtain assistance.

Please note: As part of our investigation, details of the complaint may be shared with the medical defence organisation of the individual being complained about. These organisations adhere to strict rules of confidentiality.

## **8. Ombudsman**

If you are not satisfied with our response you can refer your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (must be within 12 months of the completion of the local resolution). The Ombudsman can also consider complaints about the administration of the complaints procedure itself.

## **9. Useful contacts and websites**

### The Practice

Amanda Kimber, Office Manager  
Taunton Vale Healthcare  
Blackbrook Surgery  
Lisieux Way, Taunton, TA1 2LB

Eleanor Morley, Management Support to the Partners  
Taunton Vale Healthcare  
Blackbrook Surgery  
Lisieux Way, Taunton, TA1 2LB

### NHS England- NHSE

Telephone: 0300 311 22 33  
Email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

### Ombudsman

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel - Complaints Helpline 0345 015 4033 (8.30 am to 5.30pm Mon to Fri)  
Fax - 0300 061 4000



Email - [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)

Websites

[www.nhschoices.nhs.uk](http://www.nhschoices.nhs.uk)



TAUNTON VALE HEALTHCARE

Complaint Form

***Complainant's details***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Patient's details** (where different from above)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Usual GP \_\_\_\_\_

(We will need the signed written authority of the patient for you to act on their behalf)

**Details of complaint** (including date(s) of events and persons involved please continue overleaf if necessary)

**Complainant's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



**COMPLAINT FORM (Continued)**

**Where the complainant is not the patient:**

I, ..... authorise the complaint set  
out overleaf to be made on my behalf by .....

and I agree that the practice may disclose to .....  
(only in so far as is necessary to answer the complaint) confidential information  
about me which I provided to them.

Patient's signature: ..... Date: .....

Name and Address: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

