



(Incorporating Emersons Green Medical Centre, Leap Valley Surgery and Abbotswood Surgery)

## **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT**

A patient's guide to the complaint's procedure at your surgery

At Green Valleys Health we do our utmost to always offer the best possible treatment and care. However, we recognise that occasionally things may go wrong, and misunderstandings may arise. If this happens, we like to find out what the problem is, solve it if possible, and use the information obtained to improve the way we work in the future. You can help us improve the quality of our services by making constructive comments and suggestions.

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from the surgery, you are entitled to make a complaint, giving you the chance to put across your view of what went wrong. We will then consider what you have said, provide you with a response from either a manager or the appropriate clinician, and where necessary offer an apology.

### **How should I complain?**

The first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is called 'Local Resolution'. This means dealing with your complaint at a local level, i.e., by speaking to us about what went wrong. Local resolution aims to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source of the complaint as possible using the most appropriate means.

A complaint should be made in writing to the Practice Manager, Maria Hartnell. Due to working patterns and other commitments, the Practice Manager may not be immediately available, so please do not present unannounced at the surgery expecting to speak to them.

You can also raise your concerns immediately by speaking to one of our Team Leaders, or another member of staff (e.g. GP, nurse, etc). They are often able to resolve your concerns quickly, without the need to make a formal complaint.

You will receive a written or verbal acknowledgment to your complaint within 3 working days. We will agree a timescale with you in which we will fully investigate the issues you have raised. This is usually 20 working days. Upon completion of our investigation, you will receive a written response to your complaint.

## **Who can complain?**

A complaint can be made by a patient or person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of an NHS organisation or primary care practitioner (such as a GP). In certain circumstances a complaint can be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient, or person. For instance, if the patient/person is a child, has died, is unable to make the complaint themselves because of physical or mental incapacity or has requested that someone act on their behalf, a representative can complain for the patient/person.

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we must know that you have their permission to do so. A signed Third Party Consent form by the person concerned will be needed unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

## **What is the time limit for making a complaint?**

You, or your representative, should complain within 12 months of the event(s) concerned, or within 12 months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about. Your doctor does have discretion to waive this time limit if there are good reasons why you could not complain earlier.

## **Other NHS Services in South Gloucestershire**

Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG) has responsibility for commissioning hospital, mental health, community and GP out of hours services. People with complaints or concerns about these services can contact their customer service team at:

Address: South Plaza, Marlborough Street, Bristol BS1 3NX

Tel: 0117 947 4477 or 0117 900 2475

Email: [Bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net](mailto:Bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net)

NHS England has responsibility for primary care in the BNSSG area; GP practices, dental practices, opticians and pharmacies. People with complaints or concerns about these services should contact the individual organisation in the first instance, or the NHS England Customer Contact Centre:

Address: NHS England, PO Box 16728, Redditch. B97 9PT

Tel: 0300 311 22 33

E-mail: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

## **Independent Review (Second Stage)**

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you can ask the Health Service Ombudsman to review your complaint. The Ombudsman are completely independent of the NHS and Government. You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Address: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank,  
London, SW1P 4QP  
Telephone: 0345 015 4033  
Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

**Where can I get further advice and help?**

We hope that you will contact the practice in the first instance to give us an opportunity to resolve your concerns. However, we understand that sometimes you want to obtain further advice and help.

The Care Forum is a local independent complaints advocacy for people wanting to complain about NHS Services. They can be contacted via the freephone number: 0808 8085252.