PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of an 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 and with the person concerned. 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. This would be ideally within a matter of days or at most a few weeks because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily.

If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

- within 12 months of the cause of the complaint; or
- within 12 months of discovering there was cause to complain.

Complaints should be addressed to Mrs Debbie Bodhanya, Managing Partner. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with Debbie in order to discuss your concerns. She will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

What we shall do

We shall acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within 25 working days of the date when you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with the people involved. When we look into your complaint, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this;
- make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

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. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

Ways to complain

We hope that, if you have a concern, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this gives us the best opportunity to investigate what has happened, put things right where possible and use your experience to improve our services.

However, you are not required to complain directly to the practice. If you feel unable to do so, you may instead submit your complaint to NHS Essex Integrated Care Board, which commissions primary care services in this area. You should complain either to the practice or to NHS Essex ICB, but not to both organisations about the same matter.

Current contact details for NHS Essex ICB's complaints service can be found at: www.essex.icb.nhs.uk/health/rights/patient-experience-feedback-essex/nhs-complaints-essex/. Tel: 0160 348 1283, postal address: NHS Essex, Seax House, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1QH

You may obtain free-of-charge confidential support in relation to your complaint from VoiceAbility (Advocacy Service) on 0300 303 1660, or by email to: helpline@voiceability.org.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint from either this practice or the ICB, then you can escalate your complaint to Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) by completing their online form at www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint or calling their Customer Helpline on 0345 015 4033.

Practice Information for Patients

Complaints and the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We welcome feedback and complaints, and we want to understand your experience in your own words.

We are committed to handling complaints fairly, openly and compassionately, in line with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's NHS Complaint Standards.

Some people choose to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help write complaints or emails. We understand that these tools can be helpful in organising thoughts or expressing concerns.

However, AI-generated text can sometimes:

- include information that is inaccurate or not relevant;
- use overly formal or legal language;
- make complaints longer or more complex than necessary; or
- make it harder for us to clearly understand your personal experience.

This can occasionally delay our review or mean we need to contact you to clarify the details before we can respond fully.

The most helpful complaints are usually clear and concise, and explain:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- how it affected you; and
- what you would like us to do to resolve the matter.

A short explanation in your own words is often more helpful than a long or highly formal letter.

If you choose to use AI tools, we recommend that you:

- check the wording carefully to ensure it reflects your own experience;
- remove any information that is inaccurate or not relevant; and
- take care when including sensitive personal information.

Please be aware that some AI tools may store or use information entered into them.

For further guidance on using AI to support a complaint, you may find this resource from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman helpful: Using AI tools to help your complaint

If you need support to make a complaint - for example due to language needs, disability, learning disability, or mental health or communication difficulties - please let us know. We will do our best to support you in a way that works for you.