



***Westlands Medical Centre***

# Patient Complaints

## Practice Policy

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<b>Owner:</b>	Di Moore
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Patients raising concerns and complaints about the service they have received from the doctors or any of the staff working at Westlands Medical Centre should be encouraged to let the practice know. The practice complaints procedure meets the NHS system for dealing with complaints.

## **AIM**

This document outlines the principles of making a complaint to and/or about the practice, its staff and the systems that it operates.

## **INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

This practice operates an informal method of providing patient feedback, which includes concerns, complaints and compliments in the form of a patient feedback log, displayed on the reception desk. This book is to be checked daily by the Reception

Most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. It is when problems cannot be sorted out in this way that the patient could consider a more formal, written complaint.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Patients are to be informed that should they wish to make a complaint, the Practice would like to know as soon as possible – ideally within a matter of days or at most a few weeks. This will enable us to establish what happened more readily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

- a. Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- b. Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

All complaints should be sent to the Operations Manager. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Operations Manager in order to discuss your concerns. They will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure your concerns are

dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you can be as specific as possible about your complaint.

### **ACTION ON RECEIVING A COMPLAINT**

We will acknowledge your complaint within seven working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within fourteen working days of the date that you raised it with us. However, depending on the complexity of the Complaint it may require more detailed investigation and we will notify you and keep you regularly updated. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with the person or people involved. When we look into your complaint we will aim to:

- a. Find out what happened and what went wrong.
- b. Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned if you feel you would like this.
- c. Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate.
- d. Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.

### **COMPLAINTS 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. We will need permission from the patient, in writing, authorising you to deal with matters on their behalf, however, if you are the registered carer for the patient, this will not be necessary.

### **UNSATISFACTORY OUTCOMES**

We hope you will use our complaints procedure in the first instance. We believe this gives the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong, and gives us the best opportunity of making improvements. However, if you are not satisfied with our response, you have the right to take your complaint to the Health Service

Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent of Government and the NHS. The service is confidential and free. There are time limits for taking a complaint to the Ombudsman, although this will be waived by them if they believe there is good reason to do so.

If you have any questions about whether the Ombudsman will be able to help you, visit [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk) or call them on 0345 015 4033.

Text 'call back' with your name and mobile number to 07624 813 005 and they will get back to you

For other languages or formats please contact the Ombudsman at: [publications@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:publications@ombudsman.org.uk)

Further information about the Ombudsman is available at [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).

You can write to the Ombudsman at:

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

If you need any help or support to make your complaint to the Ombudsman you can contact your local Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service, Hampshire Advocacy. Their local office can be contacted by telephone on 02380 776657, by fax on 02380 770629 or by email: [hello@hampshireadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:hello@hampshireadvocacy.org.uk)

### **KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED**

This policy must have the widest possible visibility to the people who use the service and those that care for them.

It must be communicated in as simple language as possible, as briefly as possible and in as many locations as possible.

- a. A summary of the complaints procedure is to be included in the Patient Information Leaflet, issued to all newly registered patients and upon request.
- b. Complaints posters are to be displayed in all clinical areas.
- c. In the policy section of the Practice Information Presentation, displayed on the main screen in the Waiting Room.
- d. On the Practice Website:  
[www.westlandsmedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.westlandsmedicalcentre.nhs.uk)

A written copy of this policy is to be available on request.

### **REVIEW**

This policy is to be reviewed 3 yearly or on substantive change in the law.

Jackie Dalby  
Practice Business Manager

Annex

A Complaints Poster

## Unhappy with something at Westlands?



At **Westlands**, we hope that you find your experience is a positive one and that we meet your needs... but we know that sometimes things can seem to go wrong.

If you need to complain about an aspect of the service, you can do so by:

- Using the patient comment book for informal complaints
- Visiting [www.westlandsmedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.westlandsmedicalcentre.nhs.uk) and accessing the Patient Complaints Policy
- Asking a receptionist for a copy of the policy
- Speaking to the Reception Supervisor or Operations Manager
- Giving us a call on 02392 377514 to discuss your problem.

***We really are here to help!***