

PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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** – 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 six months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- Within six months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within twelve months of the incident.

The Practice Manager or Assistant Practice Manager will be pleased to deal with your complaint. You can make your complaint in person or in writing. Some complaints may be easier to explain in writing – please give as much information as you can, then send your complaint to the practice for the attention of the Practice Manager or Assistant Practice Manager, as soon as possible.

WHAT WE SHALL DO

Our complaints procedure is designed to make sure that we settle any complaints as quickly as possible. We shall acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within 10 working days of the date when you raised it with us, or where that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. The investigation should not take longer than 20 working days in total. 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 appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not 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.

COMPLAINING TO THE HEALTH BOARD

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will make use of our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. But this does not affect your right to approach the Health Board if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation. You should contact: The Feedback Team, NHS Highland, PO Box 5713, Inverness IV1 9AQ (Telephone 01463 705997, Fax 01463 711322, Email nhshighland.feedback@nhs.net). If you remain unhappy, you can ask NHS Highland to provide a Conciliator to help at this stage. The Conciliator is a trained lay person who acts totally independently of NHS Highland. By meeting with yourself and the GP,

although not necessarily at the same time, he/she will attempt to resolve the matter to your satisfaction. The conciliation process is completely confidential and we will merely be informed if it has been successful or not, not the details. Conciliation will require the consent of all concerned.

You also have the option of contacting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to seek a review of your complaint. Complaints should be made to the Ombudsman within 12 months of the event giving rise to them, or within 12 months of the complainant becoming aware that there are grounds for complaint. The Ombudsman's contact details are:

The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 OBR
Tel: 0800 377 7330
Website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk