**Complaints Policy – The Allan Practice**

At The Allan Practice we strive to always deliver the best quality patient care in all areas of contact with the patient or patient’s representative. However, we are aware that things can go wrong and there may be times when you feel you are less than happy with the service you have received.

If you have a complaint or concern or some positive feedback about the service that you have received from the doctors or any of the staff working in the Practice, please let us know. Your comments whether positive or negative can help us to improve the service we offer.

We operate a Practice Complaints Procedure as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what to do if you have a complaint about the service that the practice provides for you.

**How Do I Complain?**

Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time they arise with the person concerned, and we ask you try this approach first. Alternatively, you could discuss your concern with the Practice Manager to see if your concerns can be resolved. Or, if you feel your doctor is the most appropriate person to approach, then you may do so. All complaints are taken seriously and will be dealt with honestly and openly in a timely way.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, we ask that these are submitted in writing to the Practice Manager by sending a letter to the practice address.

Alternatively, you may complain directly to NHS England, who commission our service.

NB you can only complain to either the practice or NHS England:

* By telephone: [**03003 11 22 33**](tel:03003%2011%2022%2033)
* By email: [**england.contactus@nhs.net**](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)
* By post: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT

Further details are available on the [**NHS England website**](http://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/).

Please let us know promptly if you have a complaint. In accordance with the NHS Complaints Procedures, a complaint must be raised within twelve months of the incident, or within twelve months of you becoming aware of the matter.

**What Will Happen Next?**

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receipt.

The complaint will be investigated, and you will receive a follow up letter as soon as practicable, which will provide details either of the outcome of any investigations and any appropriate steps that will be taken to ensure that the situation does not re-occur, or details of how we will proceed with the complaint together with any timescales.

If considered appropriate by all parties, you may be invited to attend the surgery to discuss the matter with the most appropriate staff members. If you wish, you may bring a friend or relative to this meeting.

Following this you will receive a written statement from the Practice detailing the outcome of the discussion.

Where other parties are involved, you will be kept informed about the steps being taken to obtain their statements.

If we receive a complaint that may be better directed to another organisation, we will advise you within three working days of receipt and ask you to confirm if you wish it to be forwarded on and give you the full contact details of who we would send it to.

**Confidentiality**

All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Where the investigation of the complaint requires consideration of your medical records, we will advise you if the investigation involves disclosure of information contained in those records to a person other than the Practice or an employee of the Practice.

The Practice will keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints, but such records will be kept separate from patients’ medical records.

**Complaining On Behalf of Someone Else**

Please note 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 their permission to do so. Signed consent by the person concerned will be needed, using either our complaint form, or through receipt of a letter in the practice, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

You may also find that if you are complaining on behalf of a minor (someone who is under 18 years of age) who is capable of making their own complaint, we will expect that minor to contact us themselves to lodge their complaint.

**Help with Making Complaints**

Healthwatch is an independent charity which can help with making complaints about the NHS. Further details are available on their website: [**www.healthwatch.co.uk**](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/).

You also have the right to seek assistance with any complaint from the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service which is an independent charity.

They can be contacted:

* By phone: [**0330 440 9000**](tel:0330%20440%209000)
* By email: [**info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk**](mailto:info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk)
* By post: PO Box 375, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 9HU
* Through their website: [**www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk**](http://www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk/)

**Unreasonable Complaints**

We have a responsibility to both our staff and our patients to keep them safe. Any patient becoming aggressive, threatening or violent towards members of staff in their promotion of their complaint will have robust action taken against them. This could, in extreme circumstances, include calling the police. We would therefore ask you to be calm and reasonable when making a complaint.

**Escalation of Complaints**

Every effort is made to resolve the dispute within the Practice, however, if you are not content with the outcome of your complaint at local level you have the right to approach the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. You have several options for doing this as follows:

* By phone: to the PHSO Customer Helpline on [**0345 015 4033**](tel:0345%20015%204033)
* By post: Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP
* Online: [**www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint**](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint)]
* You can also download a paper form from this site
* Further details are available on the website: [**www.ombudsman.org.uk**](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/)