



Constable Country Medical Practice

Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Author

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Approved By

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1. Introduction

At Constable Country Medical Practice, we are committed to providing high quality care and services to all patients. We recognise that there may be occasions when patients, carers, or representatives feel dissatisfied with the service provided.

We view complaints as an opportunity to:

- Listen and respond to concerns
- Learn from feedback
- Improve patient experience and service delivery
- Resolve issues promptly, fairly, and openly

This policy outlines how complaints will be managed in accordance with:

- The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009
 - NHS Complaints Guidance
 - Principles of good complaint handling from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)
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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of the practice
- Contractors and temporary staff
- Complaints made by patients, carers, relatives, advocates, or representatives

The policy covers complaints relating to:

- Clinical care
 - Administrative processes
 - Communication
 - Staff conduct
 - Access to services
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3. Complaints Management lead by: -

The practice leadership team is responsible for managing complaints and ensuring investigations are completed appropriately.

The practice leadership team consists of: -

Business Manager / Practice Manager

Responsible GP partners: -

Dr Victoria Okpiabhele & Dr Jude Ngoka

4. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

- By telephone
- In writing
- By email

Patients should normally raise complaints within:

- 12 months of the incident, or
- 12 months from the date the matter came to their attention

The practice may still investigate complaints outside this timeframe where there is good reason to do so, and it remains possible to conduct a fair investigation.



5. Complaint Contact Details

Complaints should be emailed to:

ccmp@nhs.net

Or

In writing to: -

Constable Country Medical Practice
Heath Road, East Bergholt
Colchester, Suffolk, CO7 6RT

6. Verbal Complaints

Where possible, concerns raised verbally or over the phone will be resolved promptly at the point of contact.

If the matter cannot be resolved immediately, the patient will be advised how to make a formal complaint in writing via email or to the address above.

Staff should remain polite, professional, and empathetic at all times.

7. Formal Complaints Procedure

Acknowledgement

Formal complaints will normally be acknowledged within **3 working days**.

The acknowledgement will:

- Confirm receipt of the complaint
 - Offer discussion regarding complaint expectations where appropriate
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Investigation

The practice will:

- Conduct a fair and proportionate investigation
- Review relevant records and documentation
- Obtain statements where necessary
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process

Where complaints involve clinical matters, a clinician may be involved in the investigation and response.



Response Timescale

The practice aims to provide a full written response within: -

- **40 working days**, depending on complexity

If delays occur, the complainant will be updated with reasons and revised timescales.

8. Complaint Outcomes

The final response will include:

- A summary of the complaint
 - Findings from the investigation
 - Any apologies where appropriate
 - Explanations of actions taken
 - Learning identified and service improvements where relevant
 - Information regarding escalation options
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9. Confidentiality and Consent

Complaints will be handled confidentially and in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- NHS Confidentiality requirements

Where a complaint is made on behalf of a patient, consent may be required before confidential information can be disclosed.

10. Unreasonable or Persistent Complainants

The practice recognises that complainants may feel distressed or frustrated. However, abusive, aggressive, discriminatory, or unreasonable behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.

The practice reserves the right to:

- Limit communication methods
- Require communication in writing only
- End calls or meetings where behaviour is unacceptable
- Follow the NHS Zero Tolerance Policy

Any restrictions imposed will be proportionate and documented.



11. Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed regularly to identify:

- Themes and trends
- Areas for improvement
- Training needs
- Opportunities to improve patient safety and service quality

Learning outcomes may be discussed at:

- Practice meetings
- Clinical governance meetings
- Significant event reviews

12. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the practice has completed its investigation and provided a final response, they may refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Contact Details

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Phone: 0345 015 4033

Website: [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman](https://www.phsos.org.uk/)

Address: Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

13. Accessibility

The practice will make reasonable adjustments to support patients in making complaints, including:

- Providing information in alternative formats
- Access to interpreters where appropriate
- Support for vulnerable patients

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- NHS guidance changes
- Significant issues arise from complaint handling