

# BENNETTS END SURGERY TEAM

BENNETTS END SURGERY, GATECROFT  
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTS. HP3 9LY  
Telephone: 01442 263511



## **PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

### **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 which meets the national criteria for complaints about the NHS and adult care services that came into effect from April 2009.

### **Local Resolution – the first stage of the Complaints Procedure**

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, however, and you wish to make a formal complaint to the Practice, 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 12 months from the date on which the matter occurred, or from when you first knew about the matter or the incident that caused the problem.

Complaints should be addressed to the Operational Manager. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the Patient Services Administrator 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 try to acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to look into your complaint as soon as possible thereafter, usually within 3 working weeks of the complaint having been raised. However, where the issues are complex this will take longer but will be no longer than 6 months. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation. When we look into your complaint, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and to understand the reason why you were dissatisfied.
- 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 learn from the complaint to ensure the problem does not happen again.

Due to the Covid pandemic and the unprecedented pressure this has had on NHS services, all areas of the NHS have been asked to prioritise their work by NHS England. The value of complaints is widely acknowledged and complaints are still

required to be investigated however, as per our complaints process, it is recognised that a full investigation may not always be possible within the usual timeframe and may be delayed at this present time.

### **Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else**

The investigation of a complaint does not remove the patient's right to confidentiality so if you are complaining on behalf of someone else, please be aware that we have a duty to satisfy ourselves that you have their permission to do so.

### **Support Available in the Complaints Procedure**

Using the Local Resolution process within the Practice does not affect your right to seek assistance when making a complaint. Support and advice is available from the NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and advocacy is available through the NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS). You can contact the local PALS via NHS Commissioning Board (Tel: 0300 311 22 33), whilst The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) can be contacted at POhWER, Hertlands House, Primett Road, Stevenage, Herts., SG1 3EE (Tel: 0300 456 2370).

### **Complaining to the Commissioner of the Service**

If you feel you cannot raise your complaint directly with the Practice or are unwilling to do so, you can ask the commissioner, NHS England, to investigate your complaint instead. Please contact NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch B97 9PT (Tel: 0300 311 22 33). As part of the management of complaints in NHS England there is joint working with Commissioning Support Units. Please be aware your information might need to be shared with this Unit. The NHS England e-mail address for the Midlands and East of England Region complaints is [england.hsmcomplaintsteam@nhs.net](mailto:england.hsmcomplaintsteam@nhs.net).

### **Mediation**

There may be occasions when a complaint proves particularly difficult to resolve – when there is a risk that communication may break down completely, for example – and in these cases, mediation can be useful. An impartial mediator will endeavour to help both parties bring the complaint to an acceptable conclusion.

### **Independent Review – the Second Stage of the Complaints Procedure**

If everything has been done to resolve your complaint under Local Resolution and you remain dissatisfied with the response you have received, you can move to the second stage of the Complaints Procedure by asking the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to review the case. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and can be contacted at Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP (tel: 0345 015 4033). You can visit <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/> for more details. Please be aware that the complaint must be referred to the Ombudsman within 12 months of completion of Local Resolution.

### **Working together for continuous quality improvement**

We do hope that you will give us the opportunity of working with you to improve our Practice and are always pleased to hear your compliments, comments and complaints in order that we may continue to improve in the future.

Thank you.

The Partners at Bennetts End Surgery