

## **SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE WITH EFFECT FROM 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 FOR PATIENTS**

#### **Complaints overview**

From April 2009 a common approach to handling complaints in the NHS has been introduced. This new complaints procedure is structured around three main principles – listening, responding and improving.

This will help organisations to

- Take a more active approach to asking for people's views
- Deal with complaints more effectively
- Use the information received to learn and improve

The practice also welcomes compliments, concerns or any other comments patients may have about the surgery.

#### **How patients can make a complaint?**

There are two stages of complaints handling

- Local resolution at practice/Primary Care Trust (PCT) level
- Referral to the Ombudsman if the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the practice/PCT.

Patients may choose to make their complaint orally, in writing or electronically to the practice or alternatively to the PCT. They may make their complaints within 12 months of an incident happening or of becoming aware of the problem.

This 12 month limit does not apply if the practice is satisfied that;

- There were good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit.
- Despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate matters effectively and fairly.

#### **How the complaint is dealt with by the practice**

Practices must acknowledge receipt of all complaints within 3 working days orally or in writing and offer to discuss the matter.

The practice will ensure that they have a clear understanding of the complaint so that complaints can be dealt with appropriately, efficiently and as quickly as possible. The practice will also provide the complainant with relevant support and advice.

The patient will be advised how the complaint will be handled and the likely period for completion of the investigation and responding to the complaint. (If the complainant does not accept the offer of a discussion the practice must determine a specified response period and notify the complainant in writing of that period.)

The complainant will be kept informed as far as reasonably practicable of the progress of the investigation.

### **Responding to the complaint**

The practice will send the complainant a written response as soon as reasonably practicable after the completion of the investigation. The response must be signed by the 'responsible person'.

### **Who is responsible for complaints at the surgery and how to access the complaints procedure?**

Glen Higgins is appointed as complaints manager and Dr Ralph Drury is the GP partner 'responsible person' for complaints.

The complaints procedure is published within the practice and on its website for patients to view. The practice can assist complainants to follow the procedure, or to provide advice on where they may obtain such assistance.

### **Other patient contacts to assist complainants**

If patients prefer they can make their complaint to the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Jubilee House, 5510 John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park South, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2LH

Telephone number 01865 336787

Or patients can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 052 6088

If the patient is still not satisfied they can ask the Health or Local Government Ombudsman to review the matter. They can be contacted:

- [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)
- calling the complaints helpline of 0345 015 4033 (Mon-Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm)
- emailing [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)
- faxing 0300 061 4000
- writing to

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