



# The Wellbridge Practice

Wool Surgery, Meadow Lane, Wool,  
Wareham, Dorset, BH20 6DR

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## **COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE**

On 1 April 09 the **CARE QUALITY COMMISSION** comes into being and with it comes reform of the current complaints process.

Our responsibilities regarding the handling of complaints with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 09 are outlined below.

There will be two stages of complaints handling; local resolution at practice/PCT level and referral to the Ombudsman.

People wishing to complain may choose to make their complaint orally, in writing or electronically to the PCT rather than the practice. 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 responsible body is satisfied that:

- there were good reasons for not making the complaint within that time limit
- despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate matters effectively & fairly.

### **Complaints made orally and resolved to the complainant's satisfaction not later than the next working day are not included in these new regulations**

Under the new Regulations, **practices as "responsible bodies"** must:

- make proper arrangements for the handling and consideration of complaints.
  - A **'responsible person'** will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the arrangements
  - A **complaints manager** will manage the complaints procedure.
- We will publicise our complaints procedures and help complainants to follow the procedure, or provide advice on where they may obtain such assistance
- We will co-operate with complaints being considered by more than one responsible body and make provision for disclosure and co-operation, with the patient's prior consent
- We will agree which of two or more responsible bodies will coordinate the handling of the complaint and any communications with the complainant
- We will acknowledge receipt of any complaint either orally or in writing within three working days and offer to discuss the matter
- We will include in the discussion with the patient how the complaint will be handled and the likely period for completion of the investigation and responding to the complainant. If the complainant does not accept the offer of a discussion the

responsible body must determine a specified response period and notify the complainant in writing of that period.

- We will accept a request from the PCT to handle a complaint received by them and send an acknowledgement to the complainant within three working days
- We will record all oral complaints in writing and provide a copy of the written record for the complainant.
- We will investigate complaints appropriately and deal efficiently and speedily with all complaints
- We will keep the complainant informed as far as reasonably practicable of the progress of the investigation
- **We will send the complainant a written response as soon as reasonably practicable after completing the investigation. This response may be electronic if the complainant has consented in writing or electronically and has not withdrawn that consent.**
  - This response must be signed by the ‘responsible person’ and include a report containing the following matters;
    - an explanation of how the complaint has been considered
    - the conclusions reached, including any matters for which the complaint specifies, or the responsible body considers, that remedial action is needed
    - confirmation that the responsible body is satisfied that action needed in consequence of the complaint has been, or is proposed, to be taken
    - details of the complainant’s right to take their complaint to the Parliamentary Health Services Ombudsman.
- We will monitor and record
  - each complaint;
  - the subject matter and outcome of each complaint
  - the fact that the complainant was notified of the response period specified, any amendment of that period and whether a report was sent to the complainant within that period
- We will produce an **annual report** as soon as practicable after the 31<sup>st</sup> March for the preceding 12 months including;
  - number of complaints received
  - number of complaints that were shown to be well founded
  - the number of complaints that the practice has been informed have been passed to the Ombudsman
  - a summary of the subject matter of complaints
  - any matters of general importance arising
  - way in which complaints were handled

- the issues they raise, and any matters where action has been taken or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints.
- this report to be sent to PCT and produced for any person on request