



5 Stewart Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 4QA

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elmsmedicalpractice.co.uk

PRACTICE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Your suggestions to improve the service we provide to you are always welcome and we are trained to receive and act upon these. If you have a concern or complaint 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 as part of the NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

HOW TO COMPLAIN

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible – ideally, within a matter of days. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have the details of your complaint:

- Within 12 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- Within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem.

Complaints, written or oral, should be addressed to Ms Emma Heaton, Practice Manager, or any of the doctors, alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with Dr Bethan Rees or Ms Heaton to discuss your concerns. They 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.

Please contact us through any of the following:

Ms Emma Heaton (or named GP)
Practice Manager
The Elms Medical Practice
5 Stewart Road
Harpenden
Herts AL5 4QA

Email: elmsmedical@nhs.net 'for the attention of the Practice Manager' in the subject line.

Telephone: **01582 767444** or **01582 716680**

If you would prefer not to complain directly to the Practice, you can contact our commissioner, Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (HWE ICB). Please be aware that the HWE ICB cannot investigate if the surgery has already responded to your complaint.

By email to: weicbwe.patientfeedback@nhs.net By telephone: 01992 566122

By post: HWE ICS The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1DN

Website: [Patient experience and making a complaint – Herts and West Essex ICS](#)

HELP WITH YOUR COMPLAINT

If you need support on putting your complaint together, you can contact POhWER, a local, independent advocacy provider on 0300 456 2370.

WHAT WE SHALL DO

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three working days offering a meeting or telephone discussion so we can best understand what you would consider a satisfactory outcome. We will inform you of a realistic timescale for investigating the complaint and keep you updated if we need to revise this timetable. At the end of our investigation, we will offer you either an explanation or a meeting with the people involved.

If you do not receive a response from us within 6 months of raising your concerns, you may refer your concerns to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Details are given below.

In considering your complaint, we will:

- Find out what happened and whether anything went wrong
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problems with those concerned, if you feel this would be beneficial.
- Make sure you receive an explanation and an apology, where this is appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again

This procedure is not intended to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation.

Your care and treatment will not be compromised due to the complaint, and you will be treated with respect and courtesy throughout the process. Letters, documents and other items used during our investigation of the complaint will be held separately from your medical records for the statutory length of time. Currently this is 10 years.

COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, you must provide one of:

- Evidence of formal consent signed by the person concerned.
- A copy of a Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare
- A copy of a will showing your status as an executor.
- Evidence of parental responsibility or guardianship.

UNRESOLVED COMPLAINT

We hope that most issues can be resolved by discussions between ourselves. If you feel we have not dealt with your complaint satisfactorily after these discussions, you can then ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to investigate your concerns.

- Once a complaint has been investigated by **either** the practice **or** the **Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (HWE ICB)**, if you remain unhappy with the outcome and wish to pursue your concerns to the final stage of the NHS complaints process, you can **only** do this by contacting the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). The PHSO carries out **independent** investigations into NHS services. Further information for the PHSO can be found on their website: www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint (to complain online or download a paper form).

Alternatively you can contact PHSO

- Via mail to Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP
- By phone to the PHSO Customer Helpline on 0345 015 4033 from 8:30am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday
- By call back by sending a text to their 'call back' service: 07624 813 005

PLEASE ASK IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS INFORMATION IN LARGE PRINT.

To visit this information on our website please scan the QR code:



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