

## Complaining to outside agencies

We believe our complaints procedure gives us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong.

However, this does not affect your right to approach another authority, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us, or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

In these circumstances you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to review your complaint. You should do this within one year of raising your complaint.

You can contact the Ombudsman's Office on 0345 015 4033, or write to: Citygate, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3HQ or contact them via the website on [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

If you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us, independent support and advice can be obtained from North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA)  
Telephone: 0808 802 3000

This service can help you put your complaint in writing or can accompany you to a meeting. However, the ICA does not Investigate complaints.

# Willington Medical Group

## Complaints Procedure

**The Surgery**  
**Chapel Street**  
**Willington**  
**DL15 0EQ**

**Tel:** 01388 742500

**e-mail:** [willingtonmedical-group@nhs.net](mailto:willingtonmedical-group@nhs.net)

**Website:** [www.willingtonmedicalgroup.org.uk](http://www.willingtonmedicalgroup.org.uk)

This leaflet is also available

- in large print. Please contact Reception for a copy
- to download on our website

## Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the doctors or any member of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of an NHS system for dealing with complaints.

### How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time that 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 or at most a few weeks. 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 six months of the incident that caused the problem; or within six months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within twelve months of the incident.

Complaints should be addressed to Miss J Steele, Practice Manager or to Dr Cowell, Senior Partner.

Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with Miss Steele in order to discuss your concerns. She will explain the Complaints Procedure to you and will make sure your concerns are dealt with promptly. It would be of help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

## What we will do

- We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days.
- We will aim to have looked into your complaint within ten working days of the date when you raised it with us.
- The investigator will then interview appropriate members of the practice staff and may inspect relevant documents. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation.
- If for any reason we are unable to respond within this timescale, we will contact you to update you on the progress of the investigation.

### We aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong
- 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 any learning to ensure the problem does not happen again

## 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, we must have their written permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.