

**CHEW MAGNA SURGERY  
PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

**NHS Complaints Procedure**

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from the NHS you are entitled to make a complaint, have it considered, and receive a response from the NHS organisation or primary care practitioner concerned.

The NHS complaints procedure described below covers complaints made by a person about any matter connected with the provision of NHS services by NHS organisations or primary care practitioners in England (for instance doctors, dentists, opticians and pharmacists). The procedure also covers services provided overseas or by the independent sector where the NHS has paid for them. There may be different arrangements in place for the internal handling of complaints in Foundation Trusts (see below).

**Who can complain?**

A complaint can be made by a patient or person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of a NHS organisation or primary care practitioner. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient or person, with their consent.

**What is the time limit for making a complaint?**

You should normally complain within 6 months of the event(s) concerned or within 6 months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about. Primary care practitioners and complaints managers in NHS organisations have discretion to waive this time limit if there are good reasons why you could not complain earlier.

**To whom should I complain initially?**

The first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is 'Local Resolution'. Your complaint should be made in the first instance to the organisation or primary care practitioner providing the service. Local resolution aims to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source of the complaint as possible using the most appropriate means; for example, use of conciliation.

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff (e.g. doctor, nurse, dentist, GP or practice manager). Another useful first step is to talk to the local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which has been established in every NHS Trust and Primary Care Trust (PCT).

PALS are not part of the complaints procedure itself, but they may be able to resolve your concerns quickly and informally, or if not, they will tell you more about the NHS complaints procedure and the [Independent Complaints Advocacy Services](#) - a free, independent and confidential service which can help you make a complaint about your local NHS.

**What if I'm still unhappy after local resolution?**

If you do want to continue with your complaint you can do this orally or in writing (including e-mail) to the primary care practitioner or the NHS organisation concerned. If you make your complaint orally, a written record should be made by the complaints manager.

You should receive a response from a primary care practitioner within 10 working days or from the chief executive of the NHS organisation concerned within 20 working days. You should be kept informed of progress if this is not going to happen.

**NHS Foundation Trusts**

NHS Foundation Trusts will have their own systems for the internal handling of complaints, which

## **CHEW MAGNA SURGERY PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

may differ from the 'local resolution' process described in this leaflet. If you have a complaint about an NHS Foundation Trust, you should contact it for advice on how to make your complaint. The 'independent review' stage carried out by the Healthcare Commission does apply to NHS Foundation Trusts, which are also covered by the Health Service Ombudsman.

### **Independent Review**

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, including a complaint about an NHS Foundation Trust, you can ask the Healthcare Commission for an "Independent Review" of your case. The Healthcare Commission is an independent body established to promote improvements in healthcare. You can contact the Commission at:

Healthcare Commission  
FREEPOST NAT 18958  
Complaints Investigation Team  
Manchester, M1 9XZ

Tel: 0845 601 3012

e-mail: [complaints@healthcarecommission.org.uk](mailto:complaints@healthcarecommission.org.uk)

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

### **The Health Service Ombudsman**

If you remain unhappy after local resolution and independent review then you can complain to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and Government. You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London, SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0845 015 4033

e-mail: [OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk)

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

### **Where can I get further advice and help?**

- The PALS or complaints manager at the NHS organisation you are complaining about can provide advice, including about local independent complaints advocacy services. Your local Primary Care Trust can also advise if you have a complaint about a primary care practitioner (Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Pharmacist)
- The [Independent Complaints Advocacy Service \(ICAS\)](#) provides advice and support to people who want to complain about the NHS
- Call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- The Department of Health's website also has [information on the NHS complaints procedure](#)

**CHEW MAGNA SURGERY  
PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**