

St Alban's Medical Centre

COMPLAINTS – Information for Patients

At St Alban's Medical Centre, we are committed to providing the highest possible standard of care and service to our patients. We welcome feedback, comments, concerns and complaints, as they help us understand where improvements may be needed.

If you feel that our service has not met your expectations, we encourage you to tell us so that we can investigate your concerns and try to put things right. This procedure cannot be used to determine questions of legal liability or compensation.

The NHS Complaints Procedure covers complaints about services provided by this practice. If your concern relates to another NHS service, we will advise you how to contact the appropriate organisation.

A complaint may also be made by someone acting on behalf of a patient, subject to appropriate consent. Where a patient lacks capacity or is unable to provide written consent because of their medical condition, the practice will consider whether it is appropriate for the representative to act on the patient's behalf in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

To raise a concern, you can do any of the following:

- Ask to speak to the Practice Manager.
- Raise your concerns with a GP.
- Write a letter to the Practice Manager.
- Email the Practice Manager at colette.kiernander@dorsetgp.nhs.uk (please note that your email may not be encrypted).
- Contact an Advocacy service or NHS Dorset (see details below).
- Look up our policy / download a complaints form on our website at www.stalbansmc.co.uk – see Practice Policies section.

Practice response:

- The Practice Manager will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt. This would usually be in the form of a letter, although she may also contact you by telephone or arrange to meet you in person.
- The Practice Manager will investigate the complaint, which will include discussion with all persons involved. Unless previously agreed otherwise, a written report on the investigation will be sent to you within 10 working days. Sometimes, an investigation will take longer – in these cases, the Practice Manager will contact you to explain the reason for the delay and advise on when a response is likely to be sent to you.
- The Practice Manager would be happy to discuss any findings with you.
- You will be advised of other options open to you, if you do not feel your complaint has been resolved.
- Complaint records are kept in a separate file and not in the patient notes – making a complaint will not affect the way in which you are treated.
- The practice reviews complaints in Practice Meetings and at Annual Review, to identify learning points and implement changes if needed.

Complex or Multi-Issue Complaints

Some complaints may be lengthy, complex or cover multiple issues, whether prepared by the complainant themselves or with assistance from others, including artificial intelligence (AI) tools. In such circumstances, and in line with Section 12 of the NHS England Complaints Policy, the Practice Manager may contact the complainant to clarify the concerns being raised, identify the outcomes sought and agree the scope of the investigation.

NHS Complaints Procedure

We hope that if you have a problem, you will use our In-house complaints procedure and that the response you receive will be satisfactory. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice.

However, if you do not wish to complain directly to the Practice you can address your complaint to NHS Dorset:

NHS Dorset Customer Complaints Team
Vespasian House
Barrack Road
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1TG
Direct tel: 01305 368926
email: customer.careteam@nhsdorset.nhs.uk
Website: feedback@nhsdorset.nhs.uk

Under the NHS Complaints Procedure, complaints are usually investigated only if they are made within 12 months of the event, or within 12 months of you realising that you have something to complain about. However, this 12-month limit does not apply if there were good reasons for not making the complaint within the time limit, or despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate matters effectively and fairly.

There are two stages to the NHS Complaints Procedure.

1st stage: Local resolution, either by St Alban's Medical Centre, or NHS Dorset.

2nd stage: If you are unhappy with the response from St Alban's Medical Centre or NHS Dorset, a request can be made to the Public Service Ombudsman for an "Independent Review" of the case. The Ombudsman cannot deal with complaints that have not previously been investigated by either the practice or NHS Dorset.

The Public Service Ombudsman can be contacted at: -

Millbank Tower
Millbank
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint/how-to-complain>

The practice has to supply details of the number and type of complaints received each year to NHS England – all information is anonymised.