

## **St Alban's Medical Centre**

### **COMPLAINTS – Information for Patients**

The team at St Alban's Medical Centre always tries to provide the best possible service. If you feel that this has not happened, you may wish to raise a concern or make a complaint – the process for doing so is outlined below. This procedure is not able to deal with questions of legal liability or compensation.

The NHS Complaints Procedure covers complaints made by a person about any matter connected with the provision of NHS Services by this practice. We hope that you will contact us directly so that we can investigate the circumstances surrounding your complaint and respond as quickly as possible. If your concern is regarding another service, we will advise how you contact them to raise your issue.

Any patient or person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of the practice can make a complaint. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient or person, but only with his or her written consent. (In circumstances where the patient is unable to provide written consent due to a medical condition, a doctor will determine the extent to which it is appropriate for written consent to be absent.)

**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](mailto: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](http://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.

## Other options

### 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](mailto:customer.careteam@nhsdorset.nhs.uk)  
Website: [feedback@nhsdorset.nhs.uk](mailto: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 Parliamentary and Health 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 Ombudsman can be contacted at: -

Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
LONDON  
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

Email: [OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.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.