

Indicator 3.1 Complaints Policy

1 SUMMARY

This document describes the policy and procedure to be followed at any time a complaint is received from a patient, staff member, visitor or any other person raising an issue by way of complaint. The aim of this policy is to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a manner that is fair, simple and aims to lead to a prompt resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Purpose

Every practice is legally required to have a procedure in place for handling complaints from patients or their representative.

For many complaints there may be a crossover with incident and event management; complaints can often be used as a learning opportunity for the practice.

2.2 Background

The Health and Disability Commission's Code of Rights establishes a legal requirement for every medical practice to have a complaints policy in place. The Code of Rights sets out timeframes to be met as well as information that should be made available to the complainant as part of the complaints process

2.3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff engaged in any activity carried out at Selwyn Village Healthcare. This also applies to any external person or group carrying out any activity benefiting the Medical Practice. A complaint may be received verbally or in writing by letter, e-mail or other means and is not limited to formality in any way.

2.4 Responsibilities

All staff working in this medical centre are responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

The designated complaints officer for Selwyn Village Healthcare is the Practice Manager. The complaints officer is responsible for the implementation and management of this policy and for keeping a register recording all complaints, actions that were taken, copies of all correspondence and the eventual outcomes.

2.5 Definitions & Abbreviations

Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding an event that has occurred, or about a system or process within the practice or about a staff member. This can be written or stated verbally.
Consumer	Means a health consumer or a disability services consumer and includes a person entitled to give consent on behalf of that consumer

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3 POLICY DETAIL AND PROCEDURES

- The practice has a nominated Complaints' Officer.
- It is preferable for the complaint to be received in writing; if this is not possible then it should be written down by the staff member receiving the complaint and then read back to the patient to ensure its accuracy.
- The complaint can be made by the patient or their representative.
- Unless resolution can be achieved within 5 working days an acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint must be sent. This should be in writing and include details about the practice's complaints' policy; they should be advised that they have the right to make a complaint to Health and Disability Commissioner or the Privacy Commissioner.
- The Complaints' Officer should investigate, collect all the facts and ensure that everything is properly documented.
- All complaints will be investigated thoroughly in a timely, caring and concerned manner.
- Staff associated with a complaint will be advised prior to the investigation process commencing.
- Within the next 10 working days a decision should be made on whether or not the complaint is justified. If the investigation of the complaint will take more than 20 working days then the complainant should be advised and given an explanation for why extra time is required.
- Ongoing updates should be sent to the complainant at least once per month.
- If the practice does not feel the complaint is justified then the complainant should be advised and the decision explained.
- If the complaint is found to be justified then the patient should be advised of the reasons for the decision and the actions that are to be taken by the practice.
- The complainant should be advised on their right to appeal and given details on approaching the Health and Disability Commission. Leaflets for this are available in the practice.

4 REFERENCES

The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights Regulation 1996.

5 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FORMS

Complaint process advice to consumers - Appendix 1

Complaint Investigation Form – Appendix 2

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APPENDIX 1 – Complaint Process

Selwyn Village Healthcare endeavours to provide quality medical care. However there may be times when a consumer is dissatisfied with the service received. If this occurs the consumer may address the complaint (marked Private and Confidential) in writing or verbally to:

The Complaints Officer
Selwyn Village Healthcare
314 Selwyn Street
Spreydon
Christchurch 8244

The complaint must include the following details:

- Time and date of incident(s).
- Details of the action, event, process or staff member
- Names of personnel involved (if possible).
- Brief description of the incident(s) that occurred.

The complaint will be received in confidence and investigated thoroughly in a timely and caring manner. If not resolved within 5 working days the complaint will be acknowledged in writing and the consumer will be informed of the actions taken as part of the investigation. At any time the consumer may ask for a copy of the practice's Complaints policy.

If the consumer feels the complaint constitutes serious medical misconduct or is unhappy with the way in which the complaint was handled the consumer may at any time contact:

Health and Disability Advocacy – Christchurch – Phone 03 377 7501 or 0800 555 050

Or

The Health and Disability Commissioner
P O Box 1799
Auckland
Phone 0800 11 22 33

Thank you.

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Complaint Investigation Form

Patient's Name:		Date:	
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Person responsible for handling complaint:

Is anyone else authorised to represent the patient in this matter?

Staff involved:

Description of event/incident:

Has complainant indicated their expected outcome?

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Patient's name:	
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Discussion about complaint:

Decision:

Action to be taken:

Patient advised in writing of decision:	
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SELWYN VILLAGE HEALTHCARE

Our Commitment to You

Selwyn Village Healthcare is committed to providing quality medical services to you. Under the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer's Rights you have the following rights:

- the right to be treated with respect
- the right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment and exploitation
- the right to dignity and independence
- the right to services of a high standard
- the right to effective communication
- the right to be fully informed
- the right to make an informed choice and give informed consent
- the right to support
- rights in respect of teaching or research
- the right to make a complaint

As your Health Provider, Selwyn Village Healthcare is committed to your rights and will respond to your complaint in a timely and professional manner.

How do I make a complaint?

You may ring and ask to speak to the Practice Manager. If he or she is not available, the Practice Manager will contact you within 2 working days. If your complaint concerns the Practice Manager, then please communicate with your normal doctor at Selwyn Village Healthcare and he/she will manage the complaint. You may wish to complete the attached investigation form, or write a letter to the Practice Manager or your Doctor. If you do this please include your full name, address and a contact phone number if you have one. He/she will ring you within 2 working days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

What happens to my complaint?

The Practice Manager or Doctor will contact you to acknowledge the complaint has been received and will explain the process:

The complaint should be resolved as promptly as practicable. If it is able to be resolved within the first phone call, or shortly after, then this will be done and the complaint resolved.

However if your complaint requires further investigation, then the Practice Manager/ Doctor will advise how long it is likely to take.

The person managing the complaint will then gather information from the medical practitioners, and other team members who are relevant to, or the subject of your complaint. This will be done objectively and without bias. He/she may contact you again to seek further clarification

The management team will then discuss the gathered information and your complaint.

The purpose of this discussion is to:

- resolve any immediate issues within your complaint
- identify any system problems and improvements to internal processes highlighted by your complaint

The practice Manager or Doctor will then telephone you, or arrange to meet with you and discuss how your complaint can be resolved to the satisfaction of all relevant parties. He/she will also write to you confirming the discussion and what has been, or will be done.

Further assistance

You may also seek assistance from a Health and Disability Advocate. Information relating to this is available on line at <http://advocacy.hdc.org.nz> or you can call the Christchurch support number: (03) 377 7501

Information on your rights as a patient is available from the Health & Disability Commissioner – available on line at: <http://www.hdc.org.nz>

Beyond the rights outlined in this document, any consumer has the right to complain if they believe they have not been treated fairly as consumers under the Consumers Guarantees Act.

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