

We always try to give you the best service possible, but there may be times when you feel this has not happened. This leaflet explains what to do if you have a complaint about the services we provide for you.

## HOW TO COMPLAIN

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned.

Where your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to raise a formal complaint you should do so, preferably in writing, as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days as this helps us establish what happened more easily.

In any event your complaint should be made:

- Within 12 months of the incident, or
- Within 12 months of you discovering that you have a problem.

If you are a registered patient you can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority. See the section Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else.

Initially you should raise your concern at a 'local' level.

Local in this sense means either directly with the practice or by contacting the NHS local area team.

## Contacting the Practice Direct

Sharon Rowe  
Practice Manager  
Irnham Lodge Surgery  
Townsend Road  
Minehead  
TA24 5RG

**Tel: 01643 703289**

**Email: [info@irnhamlodge.nhs.uk](mailto:info@irnhamlodge.nhs.uk)**

Complaints of a clinical nature will be immediately referred to our senior partner Dr Huw Thomas.

## Contacting a Third Party

You may prefer to take your complaint to a third party locally and this can be done by contacting NHS England's local area team via the National Customer Contact Centre.

NHS England  
PO Box 16738  
Redditch  
B97 9PT

Telephone: 0300 311 22 33  
Email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

## Opening hours:

Monday and Tuesday	8am to 6pm
Wednesday	9.30am to 6pm
Thursday and Friday	8am to 6pm

Details of your complaint will be passed to the South West Complaints Team.

## WHAT WE DO NEXT

All complaints will be recorded at the practice immediately upon receipt.

Written complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days from the point of receipt by the Practice Manager. We aim to look into the matter within 10 working days. You may then receive a formal written reply, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) involved to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is likely to take longer, we will let you know and keep you informed as the investigation progresses.

When investigating a complaint, we attempt to see what happened and why. We want to know if there is anything we can learn from the process and make it possible for you to discuss the issue with those involved if you would like to do so.

Following the investigations, your complaint will be determined and a final response sent to you.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation, we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one co-ordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. Where your complaint was initially sent to an incorrect organisation, we may seek your consent to forward this to the correct contact.

The final response letter will include details of the result of your complaint and also your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied with the response.

## COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

We adhere to the strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved, we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that we can deal with someone else about it.

Please ask at reception for the patient complaint third party consent form which contains suitable authority for the patient to sign to enable the complaint to proceed.

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident, it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply.

We may still need to correspond direct with the patient, or may be able to deal direct with the third party, and this depends on the wording of the authority provided.

## PATIENT ADVOCACY SERVICES

Advocacy services are provided by organisations, often charities, independent of the NHS and who are not family or friends of the complainant.

An advocate will present a complaint on behalf of a patient when requested to do so and can help ensure that the correct NHS complaints procedures are followed.

There are a wide range of advocacy services available to patients including the following:

**SEAP** [www.seap.org.uk](http://www.seap.org.uk) 0330 440 9000  
**Diabetes UK** [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk) 0345 123 2399  
**Age UK** [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) 0300 020 0093  
**BILD** [www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk) 0121 415 6960  
(British Institute of Learning Disabilities)  
**Mencap** [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk) 0808 808 1111  
(Empower Me Service)  
**Carers UK** [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) 0808 808 7777

## IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE

Once you have received a final response from either the practice or NHS England's South West Complaints Team, you have the right to approach the Health Service Ombudsman if you remain dissatisfied.

The Ombudsman makes final decisions on complaints which have not been resolved locally and the service is free of charge.

The contact details are:

**The Parliamentary and Health Service  
Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP**

**Tel: 0345 0154033**

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

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**Irnham Lodge Surgery  
Townsend Road,  
Minehead,  
Somerset.  
TA24 5RG**

**E-mail: [info@irnhamlodge.nhs.uk](mailto:info@irnhamlodge.nhs.uk)  
[www.irnhamlodgesurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.irnhamlodgesurgery.nhs.uk)**

## DIRECT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Appointments/Reception  
01643 703289  
(Monday-Friday 8am - 6.30 pm)**

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# IRNHAM LODGE SURGERY



## Practice Complaints Procedure

