

COMPLAINTS AND SAFETY

Patient feedback and complaints

Receive, record and escalate every patient complaint consistently and respectfully, in line with the Health and Disability Commissioner Code of Rights.

Who it is for: Reception and admin staff. Reception handles the first response and the documentation, then escalates to the practice manager. Reception does not investigate complaints.

You will need: A complaint form, your complaints record, and the practice manager's contact.

The steps

1. Treat any expression of dissatisfaction as a complaint. Stay calm and professional, listen without interrupting, and do not debate or explain clinical care.
2. Offer a way to put it in writing: a paper form, a link by text or email, or emailing **[your practice manager]** directly. Confirm the person's contact details before sending a link.
3. Record the complaint the same day in **[your complaints record]**, with the date, who received it, the method, and a brief neutral summary. No opinions.
4. Scan any paper form and send it to **[your practice manager]** straight away, then place the paper copy in **[the practice manager's tray]**.
5. Escalate to the practice manager promptly. Escalate immediately if the person is upset, alleges clinical error or harm, raises privacy concerns, mentions legal action, or asks about the HDC.
6. If asked, explain their rights under the HDC Code, that the practice manager will acknowledge within **[X working days]** and aim to respond within **[Y working days]**, and that they can contact a free advocate on 0800 555 050 or the Health and Disability Commissioner on 0800 11 22 33.

WATCH OUT

Reception does not investigate or resolve a complaint about care, and never argues it at the desk. Never let a complaint go unlogged or wait for the person to chase it.