**Time Limits**

It is important that you make a complaint as soon as possible after the problem has arisen. Usually the NHS will only investigate complaints that are either:-

* Made within 12 months of the event, or
* Made within 12 months of you realising that you had something to complain about, as long as that is not more than 12 months after the event itself.

**Help in making your complaint**

The Community Health Council (CHC) is independent of the NHS and can offer help, advice and advocacy. You can contact the CHC at:

Swansea Bay Community Health Council

First Floor

Cimla Hospital

Neath

SA11 3SU

Tel: 01639 683490

**ESTUARY GROUP PRACTICE**

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Drs Brady, Rickards, Hopkin, Muthuvairavan, Jones, Thornley, Edwards, Chivers, Bizby, Karupiah, Grey, Jackson, Murugesan, Hughes and Calo**

**Practice Manager**

**Barry Matthews**

**Practice In-House Complaint Procedure**

The Doctors and staff of this surgery aim to provide you with a competent service. But inevitably sometimes things do go wrong and you may feel you want to complain, or maybe just bring something to our attention and tell us your concerns or even suggest improvements.

If you have any suggestions, please let us know. If you are concerned about something and would like merely to bring it to our attention then please ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager.

Your suggestions, compliments and complaints will identify for us what’s working and what’s not and will help us to provide you with a better service.

This leaflet explains our In House Complaints Procedure, which we operate in line with the NHS Guidance.

Please be assured that all your comments and complaints will be handled with complete discretion and that confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All information regarding your complaint will be handled in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you are unable to make your complaint yourself, anyone acting on your behalf would need to have your written authority. Where a patient is unable to give written consent we would need evidence that you are their next of kin, or have their agreement, before we proceed.

We hope to be able to resolve any disputes amicably and have your best interests high on our agenda. You and your family will not be penalised, nor will your healthcare be adversely affected by making a complaint.

**How to make a complaint**

If you decide to make a formal complaint, letters should be addressed to the Practice Manager or the Senior Partner.

We will then:

* Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 working days.
* Investigate your complaint
* Offer to meet with you to discuss the matter in more detail if this is appropriate.
* Offer a full, written explanation within 30 working days. If for any reason we are unable to obtain all the necessary information within this time scale we will keep you informed of the reasons for the delay.

The aim of the NHS Complaints Procedure is to resolve problems locally whenever possible and you may prefer to contact the Swansea Bay University Health Board rather than your surgery to complain, the telephone number is 01792 601800.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you should contact:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae

Pencoed

CF35 5LJ

Telephone: 0300 790 0203

E-mail: ask@ombudsman.wales

[www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales)

You should contact the Ombudsman within 1 year of when you first noticed the matters alleged in the complaint.