

Practice complaints procedure

We pride ourselves on the quality of service that we offer to our patients. Please help us to continue this and let us deal with any concerns that you have. If you have a concern or complaint please let us know. Bringing matters to our attention can help us to take steps to improve our services.

The Company adheres to the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and all local requirements on complaints management.

How to complain

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly and easily at the first point of contact. If you wish to bring any matter to our attention, please speak to someone within the practice who will be happy to deal with your concerns.

In the unlikely event that the problem cannot be resolved immediately you may wish to make a complaint. It is very important that we are aware of any potential complaints as soon as possible, ideally within a few days or at the most a few weeks.

Our complaints procedure adheres to national criteria concerning NHS complaints and we should receive a complaint as soon as possible. Complaints can be accepted up to 12 months after the incident that gave rise to the complaint or came to the complainant's notice

Written complaints should be addressed to:

Mr C Green,
Smith and Walker (Optometrists) Ltd.
16 High St,
Barton-on-Humber.
DN18 5PD.

Alternatively you may ask for an appointment with a director in order to discuss your concerns. We will explain the complaints procedure to you and ensure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be of great help if you are as specific as possible with your complaint.

What we will do

We shall acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to resolve your complaint within 6 months of the date when you raised it with us although most complaints will be resolved much more quickly, within 10 working days. You can be sure that we will treat your complaint in strict confidence. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation or a meeting with the people involved. When we look into your complaint we shall aim to:

- Discuss with you how and when we will investigate and resolve the complaint

- Find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like to do so;
- Advise in writing how long it is likely to take to respond concerning the substance of the complaint (response period)
- Keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and on completion advise in writing how we have considered the complaint and how we plan to resolve it
- Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure that the problem doesn't happen again
- We will keep a record of each complaint received, the subject matter, response period and the outcome of each complaint
- Complaints will be reported to the Health Service Commissioner (health ombudsman) as per the terms of the contract for service,
- In situations where a complaint develops into a serious incident - particularly when a patient becomes harmed or otherwise deemed at risk - the Company's serious incident policy will be activated.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of clinical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have his or her permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of physical or mental illness) of providing this.

Complaining to the Health Authority

We hope that if you have a problem you will use our practice complaints procedure as this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. This doesn't affect your right to approach the local health authority, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us, or if you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation, you should call the CCG on 01652 251000 and ask for the complaints manager for further advice.

Complaints not related to NHS services

If your complaint is not about NHS sight testing or other NHS services but about spectacles or contact lenses only and we are not able to resolve it to your satisfaction, further help is available from:

Optical Consumer Complaints Service
6 Market Square, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 3UZ
Telephone: 0844 800 5071

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is not a complaint, if it is made orally and is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction within 24 hours. A complaint may not refer to a failure to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. Nor may a complaint relate to a subject which has already been dealt with as a complaint and been resolved.