

The George Veterinary Group **Complaints Procedure**

The George Veterinary Group aims to provide a high quality and efficient service to all its clients. We listen both to positive and critical comments and use them to improve our services, so if you have views about our services and the way they are provided, we would like to hear them. Complaints procedure and

We take complaints seriously. Our aims are to:

- Deal with complaints openly, promptly and properly;
- Try to resolve complaints as soon as we can; and
- Learn from complaints and improve our services

If you know the part of the department that is relevant to your complaint, or the name or title of the appropriate senior member of staff, please make your complaint directly to them.

If you do not have this information you should ask for, or write to, the Practice Manager who will be able to either direct you or pass your complaint on to the correct member of staff.

What happens next?

The George Veterinary Group has two stages as follows.

Stage 1 - informal resolution

If you complain over the telephone, we will try to resolve your complaint on the spot. Similarly, if you complain in writing or by email we will respond promptly and in any case within 15 working days of receipt. If this is not possible, we will explain why and give you a new deadline.

Stage 2 - formal complaint

If you are not happy with the initial response you receive, you can get back in touch with us and ask for your complaint to be referred to the appropriate Director who will try to resolve the issue.

Key Stages in Complaint Management

Stage 1 – informal complaint

A complaint can be made orally or in writing to any member of staff. Once received, the staff member should log the complaint on a complaints form, which should be forwarded to their line manager.

A complaint at Stage 1 may be resolved informally; by way of an apology, by providing the service that is required, or by giving an acceptable explanation to the complainant. If this is the case, the outcome should be logged on the complaints form.

An informal complaint can be fairly straightforward and easy to resolve. The customer should receive a satisfactory response within 5 working days of making their complaint. They must be advised of their right to take their complaint to the next stage if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 2 – formal complaint

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will move onto Stage 2. More complex complaints should bypass Stage 1 and immediately be considered at Stage 2. The line manager of the member of staff receiving the initial complaint and the departmental Director should be notified of the complaint within 2 working days, using a complaints form. If the complaint is received directly by the departmental Director they will acknowledge the complaint and send details of the complaint to the relevant team manager within 3 working days of the complaint being received. This will then be logged in the complaint file.

The acknowledgement letter should summarise what the complaint is understood to be. This will ensure that the correct issues are investigated. A positive move at this point might be to offer a meeting with the complainant. The appropriate member of staff will investigate the complaint and a response should be sent to the plaintiff within 20 working days.

If the complaint cannot be resolved within the 20 days, the complainant must be kept fully informed, in writing of the reasons for the delay and give a date by which they can expect a substantive response.