SAMPLE PROCEDURE
Ref CMP-001
Version 1.0
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COMPLAINTS & SAFETY

Patient feedback and complaints

Purpose. Make sure every complaint and piece of feedback is received, recorded, and handled consistently and respectfully, in line with the HDC Code of Rights.

Who this is for. Reception and administration staff handling feedback or complaints in person, by phone, or by email. Reception manages the first response, the paperwork, and escalation. Reception does not investigate complaints.

HOW PATIENTS CAN COMPLAIN

- In person, on a paper complaint form available at reception.
- Online, through a form link sent by text or email.
- By email to the practice manager `[your practice manager email]`.
- Using the QR codes displayed in the waiting area.

STEPS

1. **Treat any concern as a complaint.** Statements like "I want to make a complaint", "I'm not happy with the service", or "something went wrong" all count. Treat any expression of dissatisfaction as a formal complaint unless the patient tells you otherwise.
2. **Respond calmly at the front desk.** Stay calm and professional, listen without interrupting, and acknowledge it: *"I'm sorry to hear that. I can give you a complaint form, or send you one by text or email."* Don't debate or explain clinical care, and don't try to resolve clinical issues yourself. Offer privacy if the patient is distressed.
3. **Offer the complaint options.** Give the patient one or more of: a paper form, a form link by text or email, or the option to email the practice manager. Confirm the correct mobile number or email before you send anything.
4. **Handle a returned form.** Scan a completed paper form and email it to the practice manager straight away, then place the paper copy in `[the practice manager's tray]`.
5. **Document it.** Record an admin note `[your PMS]` with the date and time, who received it, the method (in person, paper, text, or email), a brief neutral summary with no opinions, and the action taken.
6. **Escalate to the practice manager.** Escalate every complaint promptly. Escalate **immediately** if the patient is upset or escalating, there are allegations of clinical error or harm, privacy concerns are raised, the patient mentions the HDC, or threats or legal concerns come up.

IF A PATIENT ASKS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS

Under the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights, patients have the right to:

✓ be treated with respect ✓ receive appropriate care ✓ be fully informed ✓ make a complaint (Right 10)
✓ have it taken seriously and looked into fairly

Acknowledgement and response times follow your practice policy `[acknowledge within X working days; aim to respond within Y]`. Don't quote timeframes beyond policy.

Independent support. Health and Disability Commissioner: 0800 11 22 33, hdc.org.nz. Free, independent advocacy: 0800 555 050.

REMEMBER

! Reception does not investigate complaints.
! Every complaint is strictly confidential. Only authorised staff may see complaint information.
! Never discuss a complaint with other patients or uninvolved staff.
! Don't debate clinical care, and don't promise timeframes beyond policy.

Items shown in [brackets] are specific to your practice. Replace them with your own detail before you use this.