**Primary Care Complaint update**

**All complaints relating to Primary Care will now be managed locally - including Community Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental complaints.**

**The current process through the South East Complaints Hub (SECH) will stop at the end of the financial year, with NHS Kent and Medway Patient Experience Team taking on responsibility for these from 31 March 2025.**

**What does this mean for the way primary care, pharmacy, optometry and dental complaints are managed in Kent and Medway?**

NHS Kent and Medway is responsible for improving services within its geography.

Since July 2023 primary care complaints have been managed through the SECH, but this is changing from 31 March 2025, when NHS Kent and Medway will have responsibility for all complaints and will work with you and support you with complaints directly.

Bringing Primary Care complaints back ‘in house’ will align the service with other complaints already being managed, and allow a full service and ability to identify themes, trends and enable learning to change service delivery and drive improvements going forwards.

There are two ways people can make a complaint about GPs, dentists, optometry or pharmacies:

* They can complain directly to the healthcare provider: this is the organisation where they received the NHS service, for example a GP practice, a dental practice, a community pharmacy or an optometry practice or
* They can complain to the commissioner of the service: this is the organisation that paid for the service or care they received, in this instance NHS Kent and Medway.

After 31 March 2025 if people want to make a complaint about primary care services to the commissioner, the way to do this is changing. Rather than contacting NHS Frimley (SECH), people will contact the NHS Kent and Medway Patient Experience Team via new contact details below:

* Email: kmicb.patientexperience@nhs.net
* Phone: 01634 335095 Option 7
* Post: Patient Experience Team**,** 2nd Floor, Gail House,

Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6NB

The Patient Experience Team is available from 8:00 to 16:00, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays, and will aim respond as soon as possible within 3 working days. Each complaint that is received will receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days.

Members of the public with ongoing complaints received by NHS Frimley/SECH prior to 31 March 2025 will receive a letter from NHS Frimley/SECH, informing them that the Patient Experience Team based in NHS Kent and Medway, will now be handling their complaint.

Members of the public will still be able to make a complaint to the provider. This is **NOT** changing.

**Responsibilities for Primary Care Services**

You need to update all of your information and change the details on your website/ practice documentation regarding how patients can make a complaint, and ensure the details above are included.

We can support with some suggested wording and communications if this would be helpful.

In order to ensure the best outcomes for patients, there are specific key performance indicators in relation to complaint response times. Consequently, should you receive a request from the NHS Kent and Medway ICB to investigate a complaint, we ask that these are responded to within the timeframe articulated in the request.

**Responsibilities of the NHS Kent and Medway Patient Experience Team**

The NHS Kent and Medway Patient Experience Team are experienced complaints resolution handlers providing a comprehensive service for patients and carers. The team will work to provide local analysis to support the commissioning of health service improvements.

By giving NHS Kent and Medway responsibility for Primary Care complaints, NHS Kent and Medway will be able to design services that better meet local priorities.