

## **RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS KENT AND MEDWAY JOINT WORKING PROTOCOL**

The overarching principle for this joint working protocol will be that the focus will always be on the client and all work will be undertaken with due regard to the agreement, understanding and acceptance of the client.

### **PRINCIPLES**

- **Timescales**  
Each organisation will aim to respond within the time frames laid out in their policies. Where there is multi-agency involvement a time scale will be agreed by negotiation between all parties.
- **Organisational policies**  
All policies will adhere to the regulations and the three 'Principles of ...' documents published by the Parliamentary and Health Service ombudsman will underpin the policies and procedures of each organisation. These are: Good Administration; For Remedy; and Good Complaint Handling.

The Joint Working Protocol will be attached as an appendix to each organisation's Complaints Policy document and will therefore be ratified within the governance arrangements for that organisation.

- **Investigation Reports**  
The Kent and Medway complaints management forum will work towards standardising investigation reports.
- **Outcomes –**  
Outcomes will be shared to disseminate good practice where appropriate and with due regard for client confidentiality.

### **PRINCIPLES IN ACTION**

- **Lead Organisation**  
The recipient organisation will take responsibility for establishing a named lead organisation and for issuing an acknowledgement within the regulation timescale.
- The recipient organisation will remain as the named lead organisation until there is a formal transfer of responsibility, for which a clear audit trail will be kept.
- **Complaint planning**  
A joint complaint handling plan will be agreed at the earliest opportunity.

- **Communication**

Each organisation will identify a specific post holder who will be the first point of contact when managing cross organisation cases. This position will be of a sufficiently senior level to ensure they are able to speak for the organisation.

A list of these posts and contact details will be appended to this protocol. It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that the details are kept up to date and that there is always an individual within the organisation who has accepted and understands the contact role.

- PCTs will need to establish how GP practices will be engaged in this joint working and agree a procedure endorsed by the Kent Local Medical Committee.