



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

When you need advice, have concerns or don't know where to turn



A short guide for patients, relatives and carers

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email pals.team@gwh.nhs.uk

Our Values
Service Teamwork Ambition Respect

Document control
Directorate - Corporate
Approved Date - 01.03.2015
Next Review Date - 01.03.2016
Document Number - PIL-EDRMS000827



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Help, advice and support

As a patient, relative or carer sometimes you may need to turn to someone for help, advice and support.

This is where the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) comes in.

We can guide you through the different services available from the NHS.

The Trust welcomes feedback from our patients, their carers and family, as it gives us the opportunity to improve our services.

Raising a concern or complaint will not adversely affect your care and treatment in any way.

We will ask you how you would like us to manage your complaint and what we can do to resolve the issues you have raised.

The Trust works to address complaints in an appropriate manner so there are a number of options for our patients who have concerns.

Raising a concern

What can I do if I have a concern about my treatment or the treatment of a relative?

In the first instance please raise this with the member of staff who is providing care to the patient as soon as possible. They should be able to resolve this directly with you or find someone to help you.

You can ask to speak with a Matron or the Ward Manager. Every ward has a Modern Matron (senior nurse) who is responsible for the way nursing and ward services are provided.

If you do not wish to discuss your concerns directly with staff involved in your care you can contact PALS who will help to resolve any concerns you may have.

If you wish to make a complaint please contact PALS who will help guide you through the complaints process.

If the Trust is unable to resolve your complaint then you can approach the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman who will conduct an independent review.



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Making a complaint

Useful information to support you through the complaints process.

Who can make a complaint?

A relative or close friend can complain on behalf of a patient, however the Trust will require the patient's written permission or consent to provide information to other parties.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days.

When can a complaint be made?

A complaint must be made within 12 months of the problem occurring or within 12 months of it coming to your attention.

We aim to respond to all complaints within 25 working days. With more complex complaints it may take longer but we will keep you informed if this is the case.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service is unable to:

- help you to claim financial compensation for clinical negligence.
- help get an NHS employee disciplined.
- give you legal advice.
- help with complaints about private medical treatment.
- give medical advice.

Independent complaints advocacy

Free, independent, confidential advice and support is available from Healthwatch or SEAP, depending on where you live.

If you live in Swindon, please contact Healthwatch on 01793 497777.

If you live outside of Swindon, but within Wiltshire, please contact SEAP Wiltshire on 0300 3435733.

A member of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service can provide you with further information.



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Health Service Ombudsman

It is the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's role to carry out independent investigations into complaints about treatment or service provided through the NHS.

If a complaint cannot be resolved locally by the Trust through local resolution, it is the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's (PHSO) role to carry out an independent review.

The PHSO Helpline number is 0345 015 4033.

Further information can be obtained from their website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Contact us

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service is available Monday to Friday, 8.30am-5pm.

No appointment is necessary.

Our service is located at:

The PALS Office, Ground Floor
The Great Western Hospital
Marlborough Road
Swindon
SN3 6BB

Telephone: 01793 604031

Email: pals.team@gwh.nhs.uk

Fax: 01793 604376

If you require an interpreter or signer to assist you, please contact PALS and we will arrange this for you.