



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

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 as we can guide you through raising your issues across the different services of the NHS.

Be assured, raising a concern or complaint will not affect your care and treatment in any way other than positively.

The Trust welcomes feedback, as it gives us the opportunity to improve our services.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

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. For patients in the Community, ask to speak with the service manager.

If you do not wish to discuss your concerns directly with staff involved in your care you can contact PALS who will liaise on your behalf with the Clinical Division in order to facilitate resolving the concerns you may have.

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

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

Making a complaint

Useful information to support you through the complaints process

Who can make a complaint?

A relative or close friend can also complain on behalf of a patient, however the Trust will require the patient's written permission or consent to provide information to other parties. It is useful to have to hand the full name, date of birth and hospital number of the person, if you are contacting us about someone other than yourself.

We aim to 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.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service is here to:

- Ensure your feedback is listened to and valued.
- Gather and record the details of your issue and ensure that it is fully investigated by an appropriate manager within the clinical division.
- Ask you how you would like us to manage your complaint and what we can do to resolve the issues you have raised.
- Ensure that you get the answer to the issues you raise through our team.
- Ensure that any learning from the case is captured, shared and acted upon
- We respect the confidentiality of all involved. This means that we are unable to share with you should an NHS employee be disciplined as a result of your complaint.
- We may ask you for feedback on our services once the case has been closed.

Unfortunately we are unable to:

- Provide you with legal advice. Should you wish to seek financial compensation for clinical negligence, we recommend that you seek independent legal advice.
- To help with complaints about private medical treatment.
- As non-clinical staff we are unable to 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.

Health Service Ombudsman

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

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



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The PHSO Helpline number is 0345 015 4033 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday or text call back service on 07624 813 005 with your name and mobile number.

Further information can be obtained from www.ombudsman.org.uk

Contact us

Our service is located at:

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

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm No appointment is necessary.

Telephone: 01793 604031 **Email:** gwh.pals@nhs.net

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

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

Document Control

Division: Corporate
Department: PALS
Approved Date: May 2018
Next Review Date: May 2020
Document Number: PIL-EDRMS000827