

We may ask for your feedback on the complaints process once your complaint is closed.

**If you have any concerns, we always advise raising this with a member of staff in the relevant ward or department first, so that they can try to resolve it immediately.**

**The Patient Advice and Liaison Service is here to:**

- Ensure your feedback is listened to and valued.
- Gather and record the details of your concern 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 concern and what we can do to resolve any issues you have raised.
- Ensure that you receive an answer to any concern you raise.
- Ensure that any learning from your concern is captured, shared and acted upon.

**Unfortunately, we are unable to:**

- Provide you with legal advice. Should you wish to seek financial compensation, we recommend that you seek independent legal advice.
- Share with you about any disciplinary action as a result of your complaint.
- Help with complaints about private medical treatment.
- Give any medical advice as we are non-clinical staff.

### **Independent complaints advocacy**

Free, independent, confidential advice and support is available from services such as Healthwatch or The Advocacy People.

These services can support you in raising a concern or a complaint, and you can give them permission to manage the complaint on your behalf.

For more information about these services, please speak to a member of the PALS Team.

### **Parliamentary and 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.

The PHSO will ask you to approach the Trust to raise your complaint in the first instance. 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.

The PHSO Helpline number is 0345 015 4033  
8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday

Further information can be obtained from  
[www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

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**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](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**



## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

**Advice, concerns, and complaints.**

**Our service is located at:**

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

Monday to Friday, 9.30am-4.30pm  
No appointment is necessary.

**Telephone:** 01793 604031  
**Email:** [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)



## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

### Help, advice and support

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

### How can Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) help?

PALS provides help in many ways. For example, we can:

- Signpost you to the most appropriate area with any health-related questions.
- Help resolve concerns or problems when you're using the NHS.
- Advise you how to get more involved in your own healthcare.

PALS can give you information about:

- Great Western Hospital Trust Services including GP surgeries and Community Services managed by the Trust.
- The NHS complaints procedure, including how to get independent help if you want to make a complaint.
- Support groups outside the NHS.

PALS also helps to improve the NHS by listening to your concerns and suggestions.

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

### 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 or Outpatients, 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 Division in charge of the care you or a relative is receiving to facilitate resolving the concerns you may have.

Concerns will normally be resolved by a telephone call from a member of the senior team within the area you are raising concerns about, and we aim to resolve concerns raised within 7 working days.

We may ask for your feedback on the concerns process once your concern is closed.

### Making a complaint

If you are unhappy with treatment received from any Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust service, you can make a formal complaint through the PALS team.

### 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 and 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.

### 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 that there was a problem.