

Information for patients

How to Comment or Complain About Our Service



Governance

Introduction

We believe that the best way of improving services is listening to the people who use them. We therefore welcome comments, suggestions and complaints.

How to make a complaint about the NHS

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from this hospital you are entitled to make a complaint, have it considered and receive a response from the Trust.

A Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) has been established in this Trust. PALS are not part of the complaints procedure itself but they might be able to resolve your concerns informally or tell you more about the complaints procedure and independent complaints advocacy services.

Who can comment or complain?

Anyone who is receiving, or has received NHS treatment or services can comment or complain.

If you are unable to do this yourself, then someone else, usually a relative or close friend, can comment or complain on your behalf. However, we must be satisfied that any complaint is being made with your knowledge and consent and we will require written confirmation of this.

What is the time limit for making a complaint?

If you wish to complain it is important that you do so as soon as possible after the event you want to complain about occurs. The NHS will only investigate complaints made within twelve months of the event or within twelve months of you realising you have cause to complain. These time limits can be waived if there are good reasons why you could not complain earlier.

To whom should I complain initially?

All our staff will be pleased to help if you raise your concerns with them. In many cases it will be possible to sort out your concerns straight away. This part of the NHS complaints procedure is called 'Local Resolution'.

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff (for example the Matron) or someone else, for example the PALS (**01691 404606**). They may be able to resolve your concerns without the need to make a more formal complaint.

However, if you want to continue with your complaint you can do this verbally or by writing to the Complaints Manager or the Chief Executive at the hospital. Alternatively, you can email the Complaints Manager at: rjah.complaints@nhs.net If you make your complaint verbally, a written record will be made.

Healthwatch Shropshire provides an independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service across the county.

Healthwatch Shropshire can:

- Give you enough information and advice so you can pursue a complaint by yourself
- Offer you the support of an Independent Health Complaints Advocate who can help you to make your complaint and support you through the process
- Listen to your concerns and help you to collect together all the relevant issues and facts you need to highlight as part of your concerns
- Write letters to the right people
- Monitor the progress of your complaint with the organisation responsible and keep you updated
- Signpost you to the right organisation if we think we are not the right organisation
- Contact details are at the end of the leaflet.

Process for dealing with a written complaint

All written complaints are acknowledged within three working days. You will be invited to contact the hospital to discuss your complaint in further detail.

We will agree a timescale for investigating your complaint and you will receive a written response from the Trust within this timescale. If you do not wish to discuss your complaint further, the Trust will decide on an appropriate investigation process and timescale and inform you of this. Where there are good reasons why we cannot achieve an agreed timescale, we will keep you informed of progress and agree an extension of the timescale with you. We will need to involve staff in establishing what has happened and to decide what action is required. Any information about you will be kept confidential and in no way affect the care you receive. We may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint in detail.

We may suggest that the people responsible for your treatment are present. You may bring a friend or relative along to give you moral support. You do not have to accept the invitation to a meeting. You may prefer to see the manager alone or just wait for a full written reply.

The Health Service Ombudsman

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, then you can complain to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and Government.

You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Helpline: **0345 015 4033**

Email: **phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk**

Website: **www.ombudsman.org.uk**

What cannot be dealt with under the NHS Complaints Procedure?

- Complaints about private medical treatment (except where the complaint relates to nursing care)
- Complaints relating to Freedom of Information requests
- Complaints by employees relating to their employment

And Finally...

We want to know when things go wrong so we can quickly put them right for you. We can also learn from your experience to improve our services to other people.

We also want to know what you think of our services generally, what your suggestions are for the future, and whether you are pleased by the efforts of our staff. Please feel free to contact us with any comments or suggestions you may have.

Chief Executive

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Tel No: 01691 404358 Fax No: 01691 404239

Healthwatch Shropshire

Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service

Tel: 01743 237884

Email: enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/nhs-complaints-advocacy

Community Health Councils

The Board of Community Health Councils, 3rd Floor, 33-35
Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HB

Tel: 02920 235558

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

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