

Compliments, Comments, Concerns and Complaints

Introduction

At QE Gateshead we work hard to deliver first-class health care. We value the opinions of patients and visitors so we can continually make improvements to our services. We recognise there may be occasions when you have cause for comment or complaint. The NHS complaints system works to resolve your problems quickly and helps us learn from your experiences to improve services.

We will be pleased to pass on any comments (positive or negative) you may have to the appropriate department as we welcome feedback.

Compliments, comments and suggestions

Compliments, comments and suggestions can be addressed to the Chief Executive or the Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS). Contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet or you could use the form attached.

Concerns and queries

You may wish to address your concern or query to a member of staff or the person in charge of the service you are attending. Any member of staff will assist you with queries or problems and if they can't resolve the problem they will find someone who can.

There is also a Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) which is a confidential service offering 'On the Spot' help and advice for patients, relatives, carers and staff.

The main aim of the service is to:

- Advise and support patients, their families and carers;
- Provide information on NHS services to help you make choices;
- Listen to your questions, suggestions, concerns and compliments;
- Help sort out problems quickly on your behalf;
- Guide you through the different services available in the NHS.

Contact details can be found on pages 6 and 7.

Complaints

If you wish to make a formal complaint, our aim is to give you a prompt but thorough reply which answers all of your concerns fully and to make sure that improvements are made, if appropriate.

Who can complain?

A complaint can be made by anyone who is affected by the actions of the Trust. It can also be made by someone acting on behalf of another person, with their consent.

When can I complain?

It is important that you make your complaint as soon as possible after the event and usually within 12 months. This time limit can be extended if there are good reasons why the complaint could not be made sooner. This needs to be discussed and agreed with our complaints team.

How do I complain?

If you are in anyway unhappy about the care you are receiving the first step in many cases is to talk to the person providing the care. Most complaints are due in some way to a lack of communication. Many can be resolved quickly and easily by expressing your concerns to the person who is caring for you.

If you prefer to talk to someone who is not involved in your care, you can telephone or write to the complaints manager at this Trust whose details are outlined at the end of this leaflet.

What happens when I make a complaint?

When you contact us with your concerns we will see if we can sort out the problem straight away without needing to do anything else. If this is not possible a complaint plan will be developed. This outlines how your concerns will be investigated, including timescales and outcomes. Wherever possible and where appropriate, this will be discussed with you.

Whoever is asked to investigate your complaint will do their best to sort out the problem as quickly as possible. They may involve other staff but they will be careful to make sure that any information about you is kept confidential.

The complaint will not influence or affect any further care and treatment you (or that of the person affected by the actions of the Trust) have with us.

You may be invited to discuss the complaint either over the telephone or in a meeting. If it would help to resolve your concerns we may involve a lay conciliator or mediator with your permission. You will normally be given a written explanation of the outcome of the investigation and will be informed of what actions, if any, have been taken and what lessons have been learned from your experiences.

If there are good reasons why the timescale agreed in the complaint plan cannot be achieved, you will be kept informed of progress.

We aim to deal with your complaint to your full satisfaction with the Trust and this is known as local resolution.

Can anyone help me in making the complaint?

If you need any help, the North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) will be glad to help and support you. ICA is able to give advice, information and support to complainants throughout the process. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Being open

The Trust is committed to the principles of truthfulness, timeliness and clarity of communication and supports the **Being Open** pledge in the NHS Constitution for England which states:

“The NHS also commits when mistakes happen to acknowledge them, apologise, explain what went wrong and put things right quickly and effectively.”

What happens if I am not happy with the reply to my complaint?

If you feel that there are any matters which we have missed, misunderstood or you need clarification of any points, please contact the complaints manager within four weeks so that we have the opportunity of considering the points raised to see if there is any further action we can take to help to resolve the issues.

What if local resolution is unsuccessful?

If you are not happy with the final outcome of local resolution, you can ask the Health Service Ombudsman to look into your complaint.

The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and can be asked to look into complaints about poor treatment or service provided through the NHS in England. Their aim is to find out what happened and get the organisation involved to put things right when something has gone wrong.

The Ombudsman is not obliged to investigate every complaint put to them and they will not generally take on a case which has not been through the NHS complaints procedure or a case which has been dealt with by the courts.

You should contact the Health Service Ombudsman within 12 months of receiving the outcome of local resolution. This time limit can be extended if there are good reasons why the request could not be made sooner.

Additionally, if you have concerns regarding any of the services provided by the Trust you can contact the Care Quality Commission on telephone number 03000 616161 or email enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Further information about the Care Quality Commission is available at www.cqc.org.uk

Contact Information

Formal complaints can be made in writing to:

Chief Executive
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Sheriff Hill
Gateshead NE9 6SX

For general information or enquiries about complaints, please contact:

Complaints Manager
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Sheriff Hill
Gateshead NE9 6SX
Tel: 0191 445 6047
email: gan-tr.ghnt-complaints@nhs.net

Alternatively, if you do not wish to make a formal complaint you can have your concerns investigated by contacting:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) located in the orange zone of the hospital
Telephone: 0191 445 6129 Freephone number: 0800 953 0667
email: ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net

In writing to:
PALS Manager
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

This information is also available on our website: www.qegateshead.nhs.uk

Other useful contacts

North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy

Tel: 0808 802 3000

Website: www.nenhscomplaintsadvocacy.co.uk

The Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Helpline Tel: 0345 015 4033

email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Compliments, comments and suggestions

We are always trying to improve our service so if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions please let us know. Your opinions will help us to review and improve the services we provide.

If you would like to pay a compliment, make a comment or suggestion, please complete this form and pass it on (or post it) to the PALS desk located in the orange zone of the hospital.

Your name and address:

Contact telephone number (*optional*):

Name and date of birth of patient:

Ward or Department:

Compliments:

Comments:

Suggestions:

Data Protection

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages
and formats upon request**

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