

**HOW TO MAKE A
COMPLAINT**

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If it matters to you; it matters to us

Sometimes things do not go as planned. Voicing your concerns or making a complaint allows us to learn from your experience and we can then improve the service for all future patients.

If you have concerns about your care or that of a loved one, and wish to discuss them, in the first instance you should speak to the person in charge so they can help to resolve the matter straight away.

In hospital this will be the Ward Manager or Sister, Department Manager or Matron. If you would like to talk to someone not involved in your care or are unsure who to talk to you can contact the:

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice & Liaison Service provides support to patients, carers and relatives representing your views quickly and effectively, resolving any concerns or difficulties you may be experiencing, by working with Trust staff.

PALS does not replace the Complaints Process but you may choose to speak to the PALS first as PALS staff often have the skills and contacts to be able to resolve your concerns/issues quickly and effectively.

PALS offer impartial advice and support to patients, their families and carers with consent if not the patient. They listen and help sort out your concerns, suggestions or queries quickly. They explain what you can expect from us and how long a resolution may take. They can refer to other NHS, Voluntary and Self Help Organisations.

There is a PALS officer available at each hospital site and their contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

Complaints

The 2009 NHS Complaints Procedure covers complaints made by a person about matters connected with the provision of NHS services by NHS Organisations and also covers services provided to overseas patients or by the private sector where the NHS has paid for them, but does not cover complaints regarding treatment paid for privately.

Who can complain? How do I make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by a patient or a person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of a NHS organisation regarding treatment and services. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient or person, with their consent.

If, having raised your concerns with the Ward or Department staff and PALS they have not been resolved, your next step is to make a complaint by writing to the Patient Relations Manager at the Cumberland Infirmary. Her details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

What is the time limit for making a complaint?

Normally a complaint must be made within 12 months of an incident happening or from when you become aware of the matter complained about. However it is much easier to deal effectively with your complaint if it is made as soon as possible after the event. Complaints received outside of these timescales may be investigated if there is a good reason why the complaint could not be made earlier and only if it is still possible to investigate what happened.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Please be assured that it is strict Trust policy that patients, carers and relatives will not be adversely affected in the event that they make a complaint and that you will be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

Support in making a complaint

If you need support or help to make a complaint the independent complaints advocacy services (People First in this area) can support you. The organisation provides a confidential service which is free and independent of the NHS. Their details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

What happens when I make a complaint?

For complaints investigated under the terms of the NHS 2009 Complaints Procedure we will acknowledge your complaint, where possible, in three working days. If your complaint is about or involves other organisations such as GP and Dental services, other hospitals or the Ambulance Trust, we will need to share your complaint or pass it on in entirety for investigation. We will notify you of this and request your consent.

When we start our investigation, we will appoint an appropriate member of staff as the complaint lead who will contact you to:

- establish the key points you want us to investigate
- inform you of the investigation process
- agree a preliminary time when you can expect to receive the response
- if this changes, the complaint lead will contact you to agree an alternative date
- establish how you would like to be kept informed of progress
- you may also be invited to a meeting to discuss this further.

Your complaint will then be investigated, and a response provided.

What if I am not satisfied after receiving my response?

The Trust will do all it can to address your concerns as thoroughly as possible during the investigation. However if you feel there are any matters which have been missed, misunderstood or you need clarification, you should contact us as quickly as possible in writing to let us know the outstanding issues. The Trust will see if there is any further action possible to try and resolve the matter with you.

Parliamentary Ombudsman

If you still remain dissatisfied you can write to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and their contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

The Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission is an independent body established to promote improvements in healthcare. You can contact the Commission to raise concerns, but individual complaints will not be investigated. Their contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

Contact details for further Help and Advice:

Organisation	Role	Contact Details
North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust	Patient Advice & Liaison (PALS) PALS offer impartial advice and support to patients, families and carers. They can help sort concerns and queries quickly	West Cumberland Hospital Whitehaven Cumbria CA28 8JG Tel: 01946 523818 Email: PALSWCH@ncuh.nhs.uk
North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust		Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7HY Tel: 01228 814008 Email: PALSCIC@ncuh.nhs.uk
North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust	Complaints Department You can write to the Complaints Department with details of your complaint and this will be investigated	The Patient Relations Manager Cumberland Infirmary Newtown Road Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7HY Tel: 01228 814018 Email: complaints@ncuh.nhs.uk
Independent Complaints Advocacy Service - ICAS (People First)	ICAS offers independent advice and support to people who wish to make a complaint about health organisations	Cumbria Area: 0300 303 8037 Website: www.bestlife.org.uk Email: admin@peoplefirstcumbrias.co.uk
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)	The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and the Government, and they can be approached if you remain unhappy with the attempts at local Trust resolution of your concerns.	PHSO Millbank Tower Millbank London, SW1P 4QP Tel: 0345 015 4033 Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk
Care Quality Commission	An independent body. You can contact the Commission to raise concerns, but they do not undertake investigations into individual complaints.	CQC National Customer Service Centre Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA Tel: 03000 61 61 61 Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk Website: www.cqc.org.uk

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS LEAFLET IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE OR LARGER PRINT PLEASE CONTACT THE PATIENT RELATIONS MANAGER