

# Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints Department

## Tell us what you think

**Your comments, compliments, concerns and complaints will help us to improve the services we provide to our patients**

### Listening to your feedback

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUH) – Addenbrooke’s and the Rosie Hospitals – is committed to providing care for our patients in line with our values ‘Safe, Kind and Excellent’.

The opinions of our patients and their relatives, carers and friends are important sources of information about what we are doing well and areas where we need to improve. We want to hear your thoughts so that we can take action to improve our services.

All staff at the Trust will do their best to resolve any problems which may arise with your care, and the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and complaints team are available to work with you and Trust staff to resolve concerns and complaints.

This leaflet gives information about PALS and the formal complaints process. The leaflet can help you decide how to take forward any question, concern or complaint.

We are also pleased to receive any positive feedback or suggestions for improvements to the services provided at the Trust.

### Responding to your concerns

- If you, your relatives or your carers are unhappy in any way with any part of your treatment, or the service you receive while in hospital or an outpatient clinic, you or they should speak to a member of the ward or clinic staff as soon as possible.
- If you feel unable to speak directly to staff, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and complaints team who can help you. You can call in to our office, telephone or email. Contact information is on page 9.
- A friend or relative can contact us on your behalf, but we must have your permission before we discuss your personal circumstances with anyone else.

- We can also visit you on the ward to discuss your concerns.
- We may need to look at your medical records in order to answer your questions or investigate a complaint. *Please let us know straightaway if you have any questions or concerns about this.*
- Very often problems can be resolved swiftly, so please contact us as soon as possible.
- It is helpful if you can tell us your hospital number or NHS number when you contact us.

## The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The PALS team can:

- **Help** answer any questions about your care and treatment here in hospital.
- **Advise and support** you and your family. We understand that being in hospital can be an anxious time, and you might need someone to act on your behalf.
- **Listen to your suggestions** for improving our service for patients and visitors and provide feedback to Trust staff.
- **Help resolve your concerns** if you are unhappy with any aspect of your care.
- **Pass on your compliments** to staff if you are pleased with the way they cared for you.

We work closely with staff across the Trust to resolve problems promptly. The PALS team will acknowledge any contact within two working days and aim to resolve any issues within ten working days.

If the PALS team cannot resolve your concerns, or if you would like to register your issues more formally, you may wish to raise a complaint.

## The complaints process

If you consider that your concerns have not been addressed adequately by staff in the hospital or via the PALS team, or you would like to proceed with a formal complaint immediately, this section explains the process.

### Stage one – local resolution

- You can make a complaint about your NHS care at CUH directly to us or to your local Clinical Commissioning Group – contact information is at the end of this leaflet. If you make your complaint to the Clinical Commissioning Group they will advise you how your complaint will be handled.
- If your complaint is about another organisation as well as CUH, you can include this and with your permission, we will contact the other organisation(s) for their response.

## **Stage one – local resolution (...continued)**

- You can make a complaint verbally or in writing:
  - If you make your complaint verbally (in person or over the telephone) we will make a written record and send you a copy which you can amend if necessary.
  - You can make a written complaint in a letter or by email or fax. Please let us know if you are happy for us to communicate with you by email.
- It is helpful if you provide as much information as you can, including dates of treatment. We would like to know your expectations and your desired outcome from making a complaint.
- Try to make your complaint as soon as you can. Complaints should be made within 12 months of the events you are unhappy about. If the events are longer ago than this, we will consider your reasons for not complaining sooner and still investigate and respond if we can. We understand that it sometimes takes time to think about making a complaint.
- We will send you a written acknowledgment of your complaint within three working days of receipt.
- The investigation of your complaint will be co-ordinated by a member of our complaints team (a complaints case manager) and the contact details for this person will be in the acknowledgment letter.
- The acknowledgement letter will offer you a discussion with a complaints case manager about how your complaint will be handled, how long the investigation is likely to take and when we are likely to be able to send you our response. If you do not wish to have a discussion, we aim to respond to complaints within 30 working days. If your complaint is complex it may take longer and we will let you know when we will be able to respond to you.
- We always aim to keep complainants regularly updated on the progress of the investigation. Please let us know whether you would like us to update you via phone, email or letter.
- In the unlikely event that it takes longer than six months to respond to your complaint in writing, we will write to you to explain the reasons why.
- We usually respond to complaints in writing and send the response letter to you through the post. If you would like us to communicate with you via email, please let us know that you are happy for us to do this.
- The response to your complaint will be made up of a letter signed by the Chief Executive and another letter which forms an investigation report. All investigation reports are reviewed by a member of CUH's executive team: the Chief Nurse, the Medical Director or the Chief Operating Officer.
- If you are dissatisfied with the response, the complaints case manager handling your case will be pleased to discuss how we can resolve any outstanding issues. We can send you a further written response or arrange a meeting.

## Stage one – local resolution (...continued)

- If a meeting would be the best way forward, we can arrange for you to discuss your complaint with senior medical or nursing staff. It is usually best for a meeting to take place after you have received a written response to your complaint. You can bring someone with you to support you at a meeting.
- If we consider that we can do nothing further to resolve your complaint locally, we will inform you in writing. You then have the option to request that the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) undertakes an independent review of your complaint and how we handled it.
- If your complaint is made verbally and we can resolve it to your satisfaction no later than the next working day after it is made, we will not register the issue as a formal complaint but we will record it as a PALS case.
- The complaints process at CUH is based on the national NHS complaints regulations (2009). Please let us know if you would like a copy of the regulations.

## Stage two – Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

The PHSO provides a service to the public by undertaking independent investigations into complaints which have not been resolved at a local level. This is the second stage in the complaints procedure.

In most cases the PHSO will not investigate a complaint unless it has already been made to the hospital and all other options of resolution have been explored. We will tell you if we consider that we can take no further action to resolve your complaint and provide information about the PHSO.

### **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)**

**Telephone:** 0345 015 4033

**Email:** [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)

**Write to:** Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

**Website:** [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

## Support for complainants

If you require support or advocacy from a source outside the hospital, you can contact an organisation which provides NHS complaints advocacy. For most people attending CUH, the organisation providing this service is 'Total Voice'. Total Voice will be able to direct you to other advocacy organisations if you are outside the area they cover.

Advocacy services are free and independent of the NHS and can support you to make an NHS complaint yourself, or an advocate can help you write letters and will attend meetings at the hospital. More information is on their website.

You can also contact Healthwatch Cambridgeshire. Healthwatch is an independent organisation which ensures that people have a say in important decisions about their health and social care services in their area. They can also signpost you to the relevant NHS complaints advocacy service. If you live outside Cambridgeshire you can find your local Healthwatch by visiting the website [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

Contact information for the above services is at the end of this leaflet.

**Please be assured that making a complaint will not have a negative impact on the care and treatment you receive here.**

## Our pledge

The PALS and complaints department aims to support the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's principles of:

- Getting it right
- Being customer focused
- Being open and accountable
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Putting things right
- Seeking continuous improvement

We support a culture of openness, honesty and transparency, which includes apologising and explaining what happened if something went wrong.

## Action we take as a result of your feedback

- We want to use all feedback positively to make changes for the better.
- We will tell you about any changes made as a result of your concern or complaint.
- A summary of your concern or complaint, together with the outcome, is kept on a secure database in the PALS and complaints department. We analyse this information to look for trends and themes and this helps the organisation as a whole to learn from mistakes and to improve services.
- Anonymous information about patient feedback and the action taken is shared across CUH to drive improvement.

# Patient Information

**Please contact the PALS and complaints department by phone, email or letter (contact details on page 9) if you would like to express your comments, concerns, complaints and compliments.**

**Alternatively, you may like to complete this form and return it to the PALS and complaints department.**

**Patient details:**

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

NHS number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address

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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Can we leave a message ? Yes / No

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**If completing this form on behalf of somebody else, please include your details below (we will require the consent of the patient if they are able to give it):**

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address

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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Can we leave a message? Yes / No

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please write your comments, concerns, complaint or compliments below and on the next page, including ward/department location, names and dates as best as possible. Use additional paper if required.**

**Please include the main outcomes you require from your concern or complaint.**

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....continued

Would you like a response to your feedback? Yes / No

Please circle how you would like the feedback to be provided: Telephone / Email / Post

We are always pleased to discuss how you would like any concerns to be addressed, but if you know at this stage that you would like to make a complaint, please let us know: Yes / No

<p><b>Please return this form to:</b> <b>PALS and complaints department, Box 53</b> <b>Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</b> <b>Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ</b></p>
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## Help and support

### Total Voice Advocacy Cambridge and Peterborough

Specialised advocacy service providers: VoiceAbility, Cambridgeshire Deaf Association and NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

**Tel:** 0300 222 5704

**Email:** [tvcp@voiceability.org](mailto:tvcp@voiceability.org)

**Website:** [www.totalvoicecp.org](http://www.totalvoicecp.org)

**NYAS** – for children and young people

**Tel:** 0808 808 1001

**Email:** [help@nyas.com](mailto:help@nyas.com)

### Healthwatch

Consumer Champion for Health and Social Care

**Telephone:** 01480 420628

**Email:** [enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk)

**Write to:** Freepost RTHA-RTYE-SAT, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon PE29 7HN

**Website:** [www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk)

If you live outside Cambridgeshire, visit [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk) for further information.

### AvMA

Free, independent medico-legal advice service

**Telephone:** 0845 123 2352

Website@ [www.avma.org.uk](http://www.avma.org.uk)

### One Place – Cambridge University Hospitals Information and Advice Centre

**Location:** Immediately outside the main Addenbrooke's Hospital entrance.

**Opening hours:** 09:00 to 17:00

#### Services include:

Carers Trust: 01223 596463/0845 2410954

Disability Cambridgeshire 01480 839192

Royal Voluntary Service 01223 244749

### Clinical Commissioning Groups

For most people attending Cambridge University Hospitals, their local Clinical Commissioning Group will be Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group:

**Tel:** 01223 725400

**Email:** [capccg.contact@nhs.net](mailto:capccg.contact@nhs.net)

**Website:** [cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk](http://cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk)

**Write to:** Lockton House, Clarendon Road, Cambridge, CB2 8FH

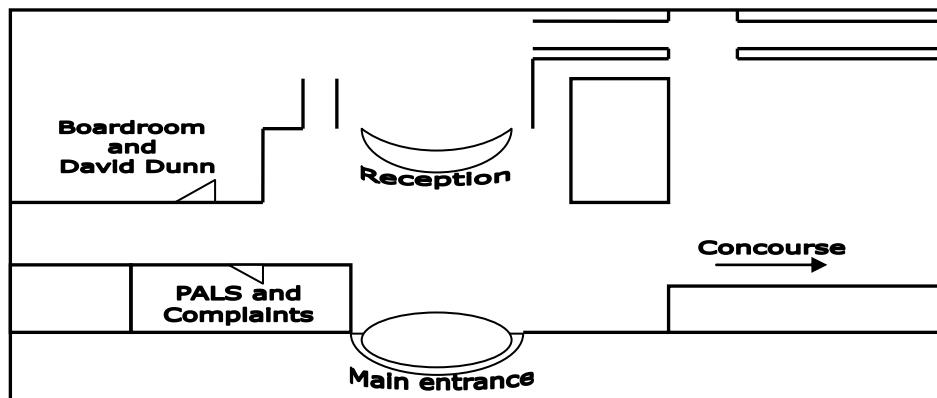
If you live outside this area, please visit NHS England's website [www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk) and search for Clinical Commissioning Groups.

## Contact us

### CUH PALS and complaints department

#### Visit:

We are located close to the main Addenbrooke's Hospital reception.



#### We are open:

Monday to Friday 09:00 – 16:00

#### Write to:

PALS and complaints department, Box 53  
Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

Email: [pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 01223 216756      Fax: 01223 256170

The office has an answerphone which is available 24 hours a day and messages will be responded to as quickly as possible – no later than two working days after receipt of a message.

If your issue is very urgent and you are calling out of normal working hours, please telephone the hospital contact centre on 01223 245151 and ask for the on call manager.

If you are an inpatient you can telephone free from your Hospedia telephone: please call \*801.

Information about the PALS and complaints department can be found at [www.cuh.org.uk/pals](http://www.cuh.org.uk/pals)



We are a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.  
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

## Other formats:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk).



Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

## Document history

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Contact number	01223 348105
Publish/Review date	February 2018/February 2021
File name	Tell_us_what_you_think_V5
Version number/Ref	V5/PIN3720/Doc ref 35514