



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

How to make a complaint

Patient information

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust is a large acute teaching hospital. We treat over half a million patients each year and our aim is to provide care and treatment of the highest standard. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the care you have received we want to know as soon as possible, as concerns can often be sorted out very quickly.

We want to make it easy for you to tell us about any problems you have experienced so that we can do our best to resolve them, learn from any mistakes and improve the way we do things in the future.

Our complaints procedure is flexible depending on the outcome you are looking for and how we can best resolve the issues raised.

What should I do if I am concerned about care received by either myself or someone that I know?

A lot of problems can be sorted out straight away just by talking to the person looking after you, such as the doctor, nurse or therapist.

If you are not happy doing this, or you have tried and are not satisfied with the response, then ask to speak to the person in charge of the ward, department or service.

There is no need to worry that telling staff you are unhappy will affect your care – they would rather know that you have a problem so they can put things right.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

You can also talk to our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), who can help raise your concern with the right people.

PALS provides information and on-the-spot help for patients, their families and carers, working to resolve concerns quickly by liaising between you and the hospital staff. PALS can also provide advice and information should you wish to pursue matters more formally.

Our PALS advisers can be contacted by telephone. For help and information regarding your care at our Brighton based hospitals please call **01273 664973** or **664511**.

For help and information regarding your care at our Haywards Heath based hospitals, please call **01444 448678**.

Alternatively, the PALS team can be contacted by email at:
uhsussex.pals@nhs.net

What happens if my concerns are not resolved?

If, despite our best efforts, we are unable to resolve your concerns informally you can make a formal complaint in the following ways:

In writing to:

The Chief Executive
Trust Headquarters
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

By email: uhsussex.patient.experience@nhs.net

Or you can contact us via the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust website www.uhsussex.nhs.net (link to Complaints, Compliments and Comments section).

How do I make a formal complaint?

Formal complaints should be made within 12 months of the event about which you are unhappy (or 12 months from the date you became aware of the problem). We ask that you let us know about your complaint as soon as possible as this makes it easier for us to provide a detailed and accurate response to you.

What about patient confidentiality?

When we are investigating your complaint, information from your health records may need to be disclosed to those involved. This will only be information relevant to your complaint.

If you do not want information from your health records to be disclosed, let us know but do bear in mind that this may affect the extent to which we can investigate your complaint.

Where can I get independent advice and support?

If you need independent help to make a complaint, you can contact the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) in your area. IHCAS can help by supporting you through the process and representing your wishes and feelings. They will help you explore the options for taking your complaint forward. ICAS can also provide help with interpreters if there are language difficulties.

You can contact your local IHCAS by telephone:

Brighton and Hove - POhWER: 0300 456 2370

or email: pohwer@pohwer.net

West Sussex IHCAS: 0300 012 0122

or email: ihcas@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

East Sussex The Advocacy People – 0330 440 9000

Email: info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk

What will I need to do?

Try to provide a clear account of what happened and it is helpful to list any specific questions to which you would like answers. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we will need to obtain their consent to enable us to correspond with you (consent is required to protect patient confidentiality).

How will you deal with my complaint?

Once your complaint has been received we will:

- Acknowledge receipt within 3 working days by telephone, letter, or email.
- We will always try to speak with you in the first instance to discuss how we can best resolve your complaint and explain a timescale for doing this.
- We will then work with the appropriate clinical staff to answer your concerns.
- Share our investigation findings with you either by telephone, a meeting or in a written response signed by the Chief Nurse or Medical Director within an agreed timescale.
- Acknowledge and apologise for any mistakes we have made.
- Ensure that action is taken to stop a similar problem happening in the future.
- Share with you the actions we are taking when serious failings in services are identified as a result of our investigation into your complaint.

If your complaint is about something that happened more than 12 months ago, we will still try to help but, in this situation, the above timescales will not apply if it is not processed as a formal complaint.

Is there anything that can't be investigated as a formal complaint?

There are some things that cannot be dealt with under the NHS complaints procedure.

- A complaint about private treatment from a consultant.
- A complaint which relates to a potentially criminal act.
- If we do not have the consent of the patient or if the patient is unable to give consent, the next of kin.

What if I am still not satisfied?

We will do everything we can to resolve your concerns with you. This may include arranging for you to meet with senior clinical and other senior staff to discuss the problem in more detail. Please contact the Complaints Team in the first instance if you have any queries about your complaint response. If, despite this, you remain unhappy with the way in which your complaint has been answered, you have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to independently review your complaint. The Ombudsman will however, only consider a complaint once all attempts at local resolution have been exhausted.

Further information about the role and work of the Ombudsman can be found on her website at www.ombudsman.org.uk or by calling **0345 015 4033**. You can write to the Parliamentary and Healthservice Ombudsman at Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP.

Will making a complaint affect my future care?

As an organisation, we aim to improve services as a result of the information we receive from complaints. If you make a complaint about the care you or your relative have received, this will not in any way adversely affect any care you receive in the future. Correspondence relating to any complaint is not contained within your health records.

Where else can I get information?

This is not an exhaustive list, but may provide a useful starting point.

NHS advice

If you are feeling unwell and need a telephone health assessment please call **111** free of charge.

NHS England

Telephone: **0300 311 22 33**

(Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, excluding English Bank holidays)

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

Patients Association

Helpline Telephone: **0800 345 7115**

Online enquiry form - www.patients-association.org.uk/contact

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Telephone: **0300 1239 242** for emergency ambulance, **111** and PTS complaints.

Email: pet@secamb.nhs.uk

Sussex Community Trust NHS community health services across West Sussex and Brighton and Hove

Telephone: [01273 242292](tel:01273242292)

Email: sc-tr.serviceexperience@nhs.net

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Provides specialist mental health, substance misuse and learning disability services.

Service Experience Team

Telephone: [0300 304 2198](tel:03003042198)

Email: pals@spft.nhs.uk

**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath**

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