

Introduction

This leaflet explains what to do if you have a complaint about the treatment or care that you receive at Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. We also welcome your comments and suggestions and always like to hear when things have gone well.

We hope to be able to resolve your concerns very quickly without your needing to make a formal complaint, but this leaflet explains how the national NHS complaints procedure works.

Although we aim to provide a service of the highest standard, sometimes things go wrong. We appreciate that you might not always be happy with the treatment you, a family member or a person you care for has received.

If this happens, we will do everything possible to put things right for you, and make sure, where appropriate, that the same thing does not happen again.

We take all complaints very seriously and will always investigate your concerns.

Talking it through

If you have a problem or concern about the treatment or care that you receive at Queen Victoria Hospital, we want to help you resolve this to your satisfaction as soon as possible. If you are not happy with the outcome, your concerns can be investigated as a formal complaint.

If you are an inpatient, or if you are visiting an inpatient, the best person to talk to is the nurse in charge on the ward – it is an important part of their job to listen to you and to try to resolve your concerns.

If you are an outpatient, please ask staff at any outpatient reception area to put you in touch with a senior member of staff.

The nurse in charge/senior member of staff will be able to ask a matron or a manager to speak to you, if they are unable to help you. Alternatively, you can raise concerns or make comments on our services through the hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), which provides support to patients, their families and visitors.

PALS can advise you, listen to your concerns, help sort out problems on your behalf and provide information about the NHS complaints procedure and the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service. The PALS office is on the ground floor of the main hospital (location 5), near the main entrance information desk.

What if I want to make a formal complaint?

If you feel that your concerns have not been resolved informally, you can put your concerns in writing. Your letter should be addressed to:

Chief Executive

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Holtye Road
East Grinstead
West Sussex RH19 3DZ

Or e-mail this to qvh.pals@nhs.net

Alternatively, you can arrange to speak to the patient experience manager on 01342 414000.

How do I make a complaint?

Try to make your complaint as soon as possible because this will help us to investigate the issues more effectively. All complaints should normally be made within a year of when you were aware that things went wrong or experienced poor service.

Please give as much information as possible in your complaint letter, including your name and address, hospital number, ward or department name and the names of staff involved in your care.

If you are raising more than one concern, numbering each point in your letter helps us ensure we address all of these concerns.

If you are contacting us on behalf of a relative or a friend, you may need to obtain their consent to carry out an investigation into the concerns raised. As part of our investigation, we may need to interview staff, as well as review your health records.

How can I get help with my complaint?

If you would like independent advice and support with your complaint please contact the following organisations who are independent from the trust and who can support you through the complaints process, even attending meetings if this may assist.

West Sussex resident

Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone 0300 012 0122

Email helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

East Sussex resident

The Advocacy People

Telephone 0330 440 9000

Email info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk

Website www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk

What happens next?

We will acknowledge your concerns within three working days of receipt of your letter or of concerns being raised. We will work with trust staff to investigate your complaint.

Your complaint will only be shared with those staff who need to be involved in the investigation and correspondence relating to your complaint will not be filed in your medical records.

We will always do our best to give you a full reply as quickly as possible. You should receive a written response from the trust within thirty working days (unless you have agreed to extend this time limit). However, it may take us longer to investigate your complaint fully. If for any reason we cannot respond to you in full within this timeframe, we will contact you to agree an alternative schedule.

When we have finished the investigation, the chief executive, their representative or an appropriate manager will give you a written response to your complaint.

What if I am still not happy?

If you still feel we haven't addressed all your concerns, we can continue to resolve your concerns locally – either through further written correspondence or a face-to-face meeting with the relevant senior manager and/or health professional. If you are not satisfied with our response, you

have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to review your complaint. However, it is important to note that the trust must be given a chance to address your concerns first.

Ombudsman contact details

Telephone 0345 015 4033

Website www.ombudsman.org.uk

What can't be dealt with by the complaints procedure?

There are some things that cannot be dealt with under the trust's complaints system. These include:

- complaints about private treatment
- complaints about GP's, dentists, opticians and pharmacists in the community – these need to be directed to NHS England
- events requiring investigation by a professional disciplinary body
- events about which you are already taking legal action

Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or a different format.

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Do you have a comment or complaint?

