

# Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions

This leaflet can be made available  
in alternative languages / formats on request.

*如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式  
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供*

*Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
w innych językach/formatkach.*

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# Introduction

As one of the country's largest teaching Trusts, we have highly skilled teams who offer a wide range of services at our three main hospitals; Whiston, St Helens and Newton as well as from a number of community and primary care locations.

As a Trust, our vision is to provide 5 star patient care. We strive to meet the best standards for professional care, whilst being sensitive and responsive to the needs of individual patients.

Your treatment, safety and comfort are of paramount importance to us and we will do all we can to make your stay as pleasant as possible.



## Compliments and Suggestions

We are always delighted to hear from patients, family members and visitors who are satisfied with our service. These messages are an encouragement to all groups of staff who contribute to the care of our patients.

Many patients share their compliments with us by means of a card or a letter, but you can also provide compliments and suggestions by responding to the Friends and Family Test survey; this will be either on a card that you are given, via the online survey or by a text or interactive voicemail message you receive.

Alternatively, you can send a message via the Ask Ann section of our website at [www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](http://www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk) or via NHS website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



## Concerns and Complaints

We hope your experience of the Trust is a positive one, but with thousands of patients coming through our doors every year, we recognise that we do not always get it right.

If you have concerns about any aspect of your treatment or care, no matter how small, we want to know about it as soon as possible so that we can make any necessary changes.

## Raising Concerns

The first person to discuss your concern with should be a member of staff, your health professional or ward manager/nurse in charge. They will endeavour to resolve your concern as soon as they can.

If you would prefer to speak to someone else, you can contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) by:

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

**Tel:** 0151 430 1376

Our PALS team are available between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

If the team are busy dealing with other patients during this time, you can leave your contact details with our receptionist and we will contact you as soon as possible about your concern.

You can also leave a message on the PALS answerphone service and you will receive a telephone call back at the earliest opportunity (this may be on the next working day) or you may wish to complete the PALS web form, which is available on the Trust PALS website page.

## Formal Complaints

In the first instance you should raise any concerns as previously explained with the Ward or Department and/or PALS. If you remain dissatisfied you can contact our Central Complaints Team between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday by:

**Email:** [complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk)

**Tel:** 0151 430 1167 or 0151 430 1427

Please note if your complaint requires an immediate response, please contact the hospital **Operational Site Manager** via a member of staff or through the hospital Switchboard on: 0151 426 1600.

## Making a formal complaint

Putting your concerns in writing means the Trust will treat it as a formal complaint and will acknowledge your correspondence within three working days of receiving it.

An investigation will then be carried out and you will be informed of the outcome.

You can make a formal complaint by:

- Writing a letter;
- Emailing the Trust;
- Completing an online form on our website;
- Speaking to the PALS team and telling them you wish to make a formal complaint.

## **Please write to:**

Ann Marr,  
Chief Executive,  
Mersey & West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust,  
Whiston Hospital, Warrington Road, Prescot, Merseyside,  
L35 5DR.

**Email:** [complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk)

or complete a form on our website: [www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](http://www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)

## **What information will I need to include?**

- An outline of the complaint: including as many details as possible e.g. dates, times, places and names of staff; names of wards and department areas.
- The patient's full name and address, date of birth, hospital number/ NHS number (if known), telephone number and/ or email address.
- Any thoughts you may have about reaching a satisfactory resolution.

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we will need all the details listed above. Please also tell us:

- What your relationship to the patient is, as we will need their signed consent to be able to respond to you.

Alternatively you may be asked to provide copies of:

- Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for Health & Welfare.
- Last Will & Testament if you are an Executor of their estate.

## When should I complain?

You should complain as soon as possible after you notice a problem. The NHS only investigates complaints made under the NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 within twelve months of the event happening, or within twelve months of you realising you need to complain - ideally this should not be more than one year from the event happening. These time limits, however, can be waived if there are good reasons why you could not make the complaint sooner.



## What happens after making a formal complaint?

Every issue the team deals with is different and, therefore, some cases will take longer than others to thoroughly investigate in order to provide you with an open, honest and comprehensive response.

The NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 allow up to six months to provide a complaint response. Each complaint will be assessed upon receipt and depending upon the complexity the timeframe for responding will be communicated to you when the complaint is acknowledged. Should we require further information from you this will impact on the timeframe to respond. When the investigation is complete we will write to you explaining our findings and confirming the actions taken as a result of your complaint.

You are welcome to come and discuss your complaint with the investigating manager at any stage of the complaints process and/or request a local resolution meeting.



## What happens if I am detained under the Mental Health Act?

Patients who are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 have the same rights as other NHS patients to complain about their treatment and care.

The Care Quality Commission can provide advice and assistance to those who require additional help making a complaint against a health service.

### You can contact:

CQC  
National Customer Services Centre  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne  
NE1 4PA  
Tel: 03000 61 61 61





## Where can I find independent support?

If you would like independent help and support to make a complaint, you can contact your local Advocacy service, which is free:

**Knowsley residents** are to contact:

Knowsley Advocacy Hub

**Tel:** 0300 3030 624

**Email:** [referral@knowsleyadvocacyhub.org.uk](mailto:referral@knowsleyadvocacyhub.org.uk)

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

**Liverpool residents** are to contact:

Healthwatch Advocate  
Healthwatch Liverpool  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor 151 Dale Street  
Liverpool  
L2 2AH

**Tel:** 0300 77 77 007

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

**St Helens residents** are to contact:

Healthwatch St Helens  
Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action  
Beacon Building  
College Street  
St Helens  
WA10 1TF

**Tel:** 0300 111 0007

**Email:** [info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk)

**Halton residents** are to contact:

Healthwatch Halton Advocacy Hub  
Suite 5, Foundry House  
Widnes Business Park  
Waterside Lane  
Widnes  
WA8 8GT

**Tel:** 0151 347 8183

**Email:** [advocacy@weareecs.co.uk](mailto:advocacy@weareecs.co.uk)

## What about confidentiality?

Everyone in the NHS has a duty to protect confidentiality.

All information relating to your complaint is stored securely and separately from your health records. However, in order to complete a full investigation into your complaint it may be necessary to allow suitably authorised NHS professionals access to your health records or those of the named patient. If you are unhappy with this or wish to discuss this further please, contact the Central Complaints Team.

**Email:** [complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:complaintsteamDL@sthk.nhs.uk)

**Tel:** 0151 430 1167 or 1427

## Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act is a law that gives people the general right to see recorded information held by public authorities. If you have submitted an FOI request and are unhappy with the response you have been given, you have the right to complain under the Trust's formal complaints procedure. Information on your rights under the Freedom of Information Act is available at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## Subject Access Request (SAR)

The Data Protection Act 2018, has incorporated the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which gives individuals certain rights regarding information held about them. If you wish to apply for copies of your records or those of the named patient please contact the Access & Disclosure Team.

**Email:** [Access.Disclosure@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:Access.Disclosure@sthk.nhs.uk)

**Tel:** 0151 430 1549



This leaflet can also be provided in  
Braille, audiocassette, large print  
and other languages upon request.

Please contact Patient Advice and  
Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 0151 430 1376

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