

Ref no: 071030820
From: Public
Date: 03/08/20
Subject: Cancer complaints during COVID pandemic

REQUEST

Could you please tell me between 1st March 2020 and the date of this email (31st July 2020):

1) How many PALS enquiries and official complaints your Trust has received from patients concerned about

a) the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and your Trust's response on their access to cancer treatment

b) and access to cancer testing - including tests to find out whether their cancer has spread, returned or occurred for the first time

NOTE: I suggest you search for these complaints by using the keywords 'cancer treatment', 'chemotherapy', 'cancer testing', 'coronavirus', 'COVID-19' and other relevant terms.

2) For the five most recent PALS enquiries/official complaints received, please provide me with

a) a summary of the complaint (e.g. a patient with stage 4 lung and breast cancer has contacted PALS to complain about their chemotherapy being indefinitely suspended)

b) the exact wording of the complaint, with redactions to remove potentially identifying information

c) what action the Trust took in response

RESPONSE

1. There were two (2) PALS queries received during time period relating to cancer treatment. There were zero (0) official cancer complaints during COVID pandemic during the time period specified.
 - a. One of the recorded queries was related to the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Cancer Treatment.
 - b. One of the recorded queries was related to access to Cancer Testing.
2.
 - a. Patient contacted PALS to ask advice as to whether clinics were still running. **PALS reassured the patient that the service was running as usual and advised them that on arrival at the clinic the staff would see the patient straight away.**

The patient had a telephone appointment booked, and was seeking clarity on how that worked and how they would know if it was cancer or not without seeing them. **PALS advised the patient that all referrals were being triaged by the team and that this would include identifying which patients would require a face to face or a telephone consultation, due to the limited number of face to face consultations taking place due to COVID 19. The patient was informed that the telephone consultation would take place first and if a face to face consultation was required they would be given an appointment to come into the unit, noting that any investigations or treatment would not be delayed.**
 - b. The two contacts were received via telephone and a summary of the contact is recorded on the system. We, therefore, do not have the exact wording.
 - c. Please refer to bold part of Answers for 2(a).