

Talk to us...Complaints, Comments, Concerns, Compliments

Why we need to know

At East Kent Hospitals we are committed to delivering the very best services by listening to you and learning from your experiences, positive or negative.

As one of the largest hospital Trusts in England, treating many thousands of patients each year, we aim to provide a caring and professional service to all. We therefore welcome and value your compliments, complaints, concerns, and comments as they help us continuously improve the quality of our service.

If you are still using the services you have raised concerns about, we want to assure you that your concerns will not affect your care in any way.

Listening to and addressing your concerns

If something is worrying you about the care and/or treatment you are currently receiving please tell a member of staff in the ward, clinic, or department as soon as possible, preferably at the time.

If you are not satisfied with the response, please ask to speak to a manager or a senior member of staff, who will do their best to resolve your concerns and agree with you what should be done.

If you remain unhappy and/or feel unable to approach your healthcare staff please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).



The Patient Advice and Liaison Team

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides an on-the-spot point of contact for patients, their families, and their carers who need confidential advice, support, and information on health-related matters. PALS helps in many ways, for example, it can help you by liaising with health staff to provide you with a satisfactory outcome when you encounter a problem. PALS will also advise you about the NHS complaints procedure and will also help to improve the NHS by listening to your concerns and suggestions. PALS can also guide you to support groups outside the NHS.

You can use this service in person at any of our three main hospital sites (Canterbury, Ashford, and Margate) without an appointment. You can also contact them by phone or e-mail (see contact details in this leaflet).

Making a complaint

If we are unable to resolve your concerns you can make a formal complaint either in person, by telephone, by email, or in writing clearly stating the specific issues you wish to complain about.

A complaint may be made by a patient or, with the patient's consent, by someone acting on his or her behalf. If the complaint relates to a death, we will reply to the nominated next of kin. We cannot disclose clinical information without the appropriate consent.

Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the date of the event that you are complaining about, or as soon as the matter first came to your attention. You can also complain to us about treatment in a private hospital or care home that is funded by the NHS. However, if your complaint is about private healthcare, or a private care or nursing home, and you have paid for treatment or used medical insurance, you will need to contact the healthcare provider to make the complaint.

Once your complaint has been received by the Trust

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three working days. A member of the Complaints Team will contact you to discuss and agree how to proceed and resolve your issues. We will agree a time frame for answering your complaint with you.

A thorough investigation will be made and a detailed response provided within the agreed time. Our aim is to respond to your concerns fully and honestly whilst keeping you updated of progress at every stage. If appropriate, we will arrange a meeting so that you can discuss the complaint face-to-face with the managers and clinicians concerned.

Should you need some support in making your complaint, we may suggest the involvement of SEAP (Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote).

The final stage

If, despite all our efforts to resolve your complaint you remain unhappy, the final stage is for you to contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) for a review. The PHSO's powers are set out in law and are free of charge.

You can obtain more information about the PHSO from their website: www.ombudsman.org.uk or by phone on 0345 015 4033.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) contact details:

The main details of our central team for compliments, complaints, concerns, and comments including those relating to our hospitals in Dover and Folkestone are:

- **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**
Trust Offices (1st floor), Kent and Canterbury Hospital
Ethelbert Road, Canterbury CT1 3NG
Direct dial telephone number: 01227 78 31 45
Email: ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net
Web: www.ekhft.nhs.uk

Who else can help you?

SEAP (Support, Empower, Advocate, and Promote) provides the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy which is a free, independent advocacy service that can help you make a complaint about any aspect of your NHS care or treatment. SEAP will help you to:

- express your views and concerns
- access information and services
- defend and promote your rights and responsibilities
- explore your choices and options.

SEAP Hastings, PO Box 375, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 9HU

Telephone: 0330 440 9000

Email: info@seap.org.uk

Equality and diversity

We value equality of access to our information and services and are therefore happy to provide the information in this leaflet in Braille, large print, or audio - upon request.

If you would like a copy of this document in your language, please contact the ward or department responsible for your care.

We have allocated parking spaces for disabled people, automatic doors, induction loops, and can provide interpretation. For assistance, please contact a member of staff.

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