

28. COMMENTING ON A SERVICE OR MAKING A COMPLAINT

Most organisations encourage people to comment on the service or services they provide. You may be pleased with a service or have a suggestion to make and many organisations see these comments as a way of feeding back to staff that have done well or making improvements to their service. For further information, for support in making a complaint, or to discuss the situation that you are unhappy with, contact the Carers Support Service or the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Contact details In *Chapter 1, Advice and Information*



When people are dissatisfied with a service they are often reluctant to complain, fearing that the fact that they have complained will affect the service they receive in the future. This should NOT happen.

Complaining can result in an apology, explanation or other action and may change or improve the service for the future.

The process of complaining can sometimes be difficult, but there are people who can help.

Each service or organisation will have its own Complaints Procedure.

For details contact the organisation direct and ask for a copy of their complaints procedure and put your complaint in writing as soon as possible and keep a copy of the letter for future reference.

Health Service Commissioner (The Ombudsman)

If your complaint cannot be resolved locally, you can contact: The Health Service Ombudsman for England 11th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, LONDON, SW1P 4QP Tel: 0845 015 4033

A leaflet produced in several languages is available explaining the NHS Complaints System from the Health Literature Line Tel: 0870 155 5455.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

Provides independent, confidential advice on how to make an informal or formal complaint about an NHS service. Contact: ICAS, Ground Floor, 7 Vale Avenue, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1DJ. Tel: 0845 6008616 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Website: www.icassoutheast.org.uk Email: tunbridgew.icas@seap.org.uk

National Health Service

It is essential to make your complaint as soon as possible as there are time limits for investigating complaints – usually six months after the event.

If your complaint is about one of the NHS Trusts, then contact the Chief Executive of the appropriate Trust. Complaints about your Primary Health Care Team (GPs and other workers at the surgery) should initially be sent to the Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust – the address is in *Chapter 6, Health Services*.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This is the body through which local authorities with social services responsibilities have the power to scrutinise NHS services. In West Sussex this committee is called the 'Health Scrutiny Select Committee' and it looks at matters relating to the

planning, provision and delivery of health services. The committee must be consulted by NHS bodies on any proposal for substantial development or variation in health services. Matters are also referred to the Committee by PPI Forums.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This is a confidential service providing advice and support in sorting out any concerns that a patient or carer may have about the care that is being received through an NHS Trust or Primary Care Trust. The service provides information to patients, carers and their families about local health services and puts people in touch with local support groups. They can also tell people about the complaints procedure and signpost them to the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS). Each Trust has their own PALS Manager and you will need to contact the one that is relevant to you.

West Sussex PCT

- West Locality (covering Chichester, Bognor Regis, Midhurst, Manhood Peninsular and surrounding areas) – Bernice Preddy Tel: 01243 534035
Website: www.westsussexpct.nhs.uk
- Royal West Sussex NHS Trust (i.e. St Richard's Hospital) - Delia Reed
Tel: 01243 831822
Website: www.rwst.nhs.uk Email: delia.reed@rws-tr.nhs.uk
- Sussex Partnership NHS Trust (Mental Health) - Trudy Parris
Tel: 01243 815503 (if not available contact Nicola Murray at PALS East Sussex Tel: 01323 446042)

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums

Every Primary Care Trust (PCT) and NHS Trust has a PPI to seek the views of patients receiving services, to monitor services, and to influence and inform the Trust's decision-making. Primary Care PPI's also advise and monitor the NHS on its duty to involve and consult the public, as well as ensuring that ICAS (see above) is provided.

Social Services - Outline of Complaints Procedure

- (1) Talk or write to the person who has been dealing with you. This person may be able to explain why certain decisions have been made, suggest an alternative, or look at the situation afresh.
You will normally receive a written response within 14 days and this will include the name and address of your local service manager.
- (2) If you are not satisfied with the response, your next step is to write to the local service manager who will review the case and will respond within 14 days. Many difficulties can be resolved by following this procedure.
- (3) If you then wish to pursue the matter further as you remain dissatisfied write to the Complaints Officer who will respond to you formally according to guidelines laid down by the government.
- (4) At this stage you will be provided with further details about the process for dealing with your complaint, including your right to appeal to a Complaints Panel chaired by an independent person.

The Complaints and Representations Officer
West Sussex County Council, Social Services Department, The Grange, Tower Street, Chichester PO19 1QT Tel: 01243 752164