



Impact Report

Improving support for hospital patients who have problems with care



Introduction



Service users in Birmingham will benefit from improvements to NHS trusts' Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) following our report into their experiences. In December 2019, Healthwatch Birmingham published a report "*Getting the help you need - How PALS are supporting patients in Birmingham*", detailing the experiences of those that have contacted NHS hospital trusts' PALS services in Birmingham. The report highlighted the importance of a personalised and inclusive service that is responsive to individual needs, and included the response to our findings from NHS hospital trusts PALS.

You can find the [full report on our website](#).

The PALS leads of all seven hospital trusts welcomed the report and the feedback from patients and carers. They committed to using these experiences to reflect on and review current practice and plan improvements. These improvements include:

- Introduction of targets for responding to enquiries.
- Categorisation of calls to guide how cases are escalated.
- Case reference numbers for enquirers.
- Staff training in aspects of the service including data protection and mental health conditions.
- Introduction of a culturally sensitive PALS group and questionnaires to capture equality data.
- Use of patient experiences to drive change at board level through initiative such as the 'patient voice dashboard' or sharing PALS feedback at governance meetings.
- Service user leaflets and 'you said, we did' sections on PALS websites.
- Inclusion of PALS enquirers onto a patient panel.

Three of the participating trusts' PALS staff carried out shadowing sessions to share good practice, understand each other's service and improve joint working when problems occur across trusts. You can find the full response provided by each hospital trust in the Appendix of this report.

Due to these improvements, patients, families and carers seeking support from an NHS hospital trust PALS in Birmingham should experience:

- Better continuity of contact and consistency in how cases are handled.
- Better response rates and a more seamless service across the trusts in Birmingham.
- Improved confidentiality and data protection awareness amongst staff.
- A service more able to influence change at senior levels within the trust.
- A more responsive and inclusive PALS with improved access for various groups.
- Reduced variability in the PALS support people receive across Birmingham's hospital trusts.
- Improved staff understanding and awareness of the needs of various groups and health conditions including mental health, autism, sensory issues, language, young people, dementia.
- More patient involvement in improving services.
- Clearer routes for sharing feedback about PALS.

Healthwatch Birmingham has developed posters explaining these improvements to patients for NHS trust PALS to display. These can be found below. If your organisation would like to display copies of any of the posters please contact us.

Next steps

In order to ensure positive progress for service users, Healthwatch Birmingham will continue to listen to the experiences of patients receiving support from PALS in Birmingham. You can share your experiences by:

- Visiting our Online Feedback Centre here: www.healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk/your-feedback/
- Calling Healthwatch Birmingham on: 0800 6525278
- Emailing info@healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk

Healthwatch Birmingham will request updates from NHS PALS regarding progress on all outstanding work included in their responses tables in the Appendix. These will be reported on our website.

The feedback we hear about PALS services will be shared with key stakeholder such as the Care Quality Commission, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Birmingham City Council.

Healthwatch Birmingham would like to thank the trusts, patients and community and voluntary organisations for their participation and involvement in this investigation.

Who are Healthwatch Birmingham?

Local Healthwatch were established in every local authority area across England following the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Our key role is to ensure those who commission, design and deliver health and social care services hear, and take into account, the public voice. Healthwatch Birmingham listens to and gathers public and patient experiences of using local health and social care services such as general practices, pharmacists, hospitals, dentists, opticians, care homes and community-based care. We hear these experiences via our Information and Signposting Line, our online Feedback Centre, and through our community engagement activity led by staff and volunteers. You can read more about the work of Healthwatch Birmingham here: <https://healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk/about-us/>

How PALS Is Improving Support For You

The Healthwatch Birmingham report '*Getting The Help You Need - How PALS Is Supporting Patients In Birmingham*' investigated people's experience of Patient Liaison and Advice Services (PALS). Healthwatch Birmingham made recommendations for improvement to each NHS Trust, who committed to making changes to benefit patients.

Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Review and update current PALS working guidelines.
- Reflect on PALS performance.
- Identify where improvements to PALS are needed.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Introduced a named contact for each user for better continuity of support.
- Improved data protection by discussing confidentiality issues and consent with PALS users.
- Agreed regular updates with PALS users on the progress of their case.
- Communicating the impact user feedback has had on decisions through 'you said, we did' reports.

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Healthwatch Birmingham is independent of NHS and social care services. We provide patients and the public with ways to feedback and have a stronger say about the services they use in Birmingham. We have the power to ensure that those organisations that design, run or regulate NHS and social care listen to people's views and act on them.

The full list of recommendations and actions can be found on our website: www.healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk

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Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Arrange a communications campaign on confidentiality for PALS staff.
- Enhance staff recognition and understanding of autism with a signposting portal from Autism West Midlands.
- Include communication preferences of individuals in records.
- Create a more innovative survey technique to capture feedback.
- Work with other local PALS to share best practice.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Better training on data protection and information governance for PALS staff.
- Sharing information on autism via 'lessons learnt bulletins' and Clinical Governance Committees.
- 40% of service user records now have an indication of communication preference to improve patient choice.
- Ensuring that PALS users can feedback at the end of their contact with the service.
- Sharing good practice with other local PALS.
- Introduction of a culturally sensitive PALS group and remote PALS surgeries to support different communities.

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Birmingham and Solihull
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust



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Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Ensure communications from PALS adhere to the Accessible Information Standard and there are clear access routes for BSL and other community languages.
- Carry out surveys with PALS clients twice a year to inform service improvement.
- Work with other local PALS and across organisational boundaries.
- Give a named contact to PALS clients.
- Streamline how cases are handled, concerns are escalated and responses are tracked.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- The Trust website now offers information in a variety of formats including community languages and short information videos. browsealoud software makes content more accessible.
- Listening to the experiences of PALS users and others through surveys, interpreters, and increasing staff by training volunteers.
- Arranging shadowing sessions with other PALS departments to share ideas about supporting patients.
- Cases are handled more swiftly and that staff meet the needs of contacts (e.g. female PALS officers for those who request one and staff trained in mental health issues).
- PALS staff feed into Governance Meetings chaired by the Chief Medical Officer or the Chief Nurse.

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The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Improve understanding of health conditions, especially autism and similar conditions.
- Better responsiveness to initial PALS contacts and following up enquiries.
- More involvement of service users in improving PALS.
- Improve understanding of issues being raised by PALS users.
- Treat PALS users with kindness and sensitivity.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Using a new system to answer every call or email within two working days.
- Escalating cases to clinical Service Managers who contact the patient to resolve their concern.
- Agreeing dates for responses with patients.
- Signposting to appropriate departments, external providers and appropriate information.
- Involving PALS users through the Patient and Carers Forum.
- Using feedback to improve PALS by analysing themes and trends on a monthly basis.

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Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Trial new methods to improve timeliness and responsiveness (e.g. Purple Points).
- Collect demographic data about PALS users to identify needs and ensure that people from different backgrounds are aware of the service.
- Combine feedback from Friends and Family Test, PALS, Purple Points and Complaints to better understand issues
- Improve the collection of feedback by introducing a text feedback questionnaire or e-survey.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Improved timeliness and responsiveness of PALS from an average of 20.2 days to 10.86 days.
- Introduced a questionnaire to collect demographic data.
- Established a Patient Panel for community engagement.
- Using the Patient Voice Dashboard to identify concerns.
- Collected more feedback about PALS.

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University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Update information with clearer definitions of the issues PALS can deal with.
- Train staff to have a better understanding of patients' needs and difficulties accessing healthcare services (e.g. mental health and autism awareness training).
- Improve access to PALS with a Single Patient Relations Contact Centre for the three hospital sites (Heartlands, Good Hope and Queen Elizabeth).
- Ensure that PALS is appropriately resourced to manage concerns quickly, effectively and sensitively.
- Seek specific feedback from PALS users to gauge levels of satisfaction and highlight areas for improvement.



The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Guiding the support required by creating four categories for calls from patients and the public: Concern, Enquiry, Comment, and Other.
- Better staff awareness of mental health issues.
- A single contact centre for the three trust sites.
- Improved response times for calls and queries by centralising the service, and using the wider Patient Experience, Complaints and Carer Co-ordinator service for support.
- Combining information collected by PALS with other data from the Patient Experience Team, Carer Co-ordinator Service and patient councils to better understand patients' experiences.

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West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report findings, the Trust committed to:

- Provide a reference number to be used when following up cases.
- Act as a gateway to other PALS and organisations.
- Updating PALS users at different points in the investigation process.
- Survey PALS users twice a year.
- Communicate with service users about changes made as a result of their feedback.
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The Trust has reported to Healthwatch Birmingham that the following changes have been made:

- Providing PALS users with reference numbers to improve continuity of support.
- Signposting to other organisations or PALS by passing on contact details to the relevant service or individual.
- Improved communication with service users about progress of their cases.
- Conducting surveys to hear PALS users' experiences.
- Communicating the impact user feedback has had on decisions through 'you said, we did' reports.

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Appendix: Trust responses

Birmingham Women and Children's NHS Hospital Foundation Trust

Key questions from HWB to Trust	Response received from BWCT	BWCT's evidence for actions taken
<p>1. How will the feedback in this report be used by the trust to make improvements to PALS/Customer Services with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issues that led to dissatisfaction among service users • The issues that service users indicated needed to be improved to make the service more effective <p>2. What actions will be taken by the trust to improve patient and public involvement (PPI) in order to hear more feedback from service users?</p> <p>3. How will the feedback in this report help the trust to design a process that ensures that the trust is hearing enough feedback from service users to understand their experiences and make improvements to the service based on that experience?</p>	<p>Revise communications regarding the PALS service. We will check that communications are suited to the Accessible Information Standards. We will ensure that we have clear access routes for those who use BSL and community languages. We will check publicity to ensure that it explains what PALS can do for the client but also explains those areas that PALS cannot cover.</p>	<p>We have organised a new section on our BWC website to offer information in a variety of formats. This area of our website https://bwc.nhs.uk/resources-for-children-young-people-and-families has information in a variety of formats including community languages and short videos. We have currently dedicated this section for Covid-19 resources. We also offer browsealoud software to enhance speech, reading and language support.</p>
	<p>Organise a survey sampling PALS clients twice per year in a similar way to the Healthwatch Birmingham survey, so that we have a regular cohort of views about our PALS service that we can track over time. We will work with our engagement groups - Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG), Family and Patient Advisory Council (FPAC) and Think 4 Brum Group - to help co-design our survey. We will use our volunteers and interpreters to help collect feedback to ensure some impartiality.</p>	<p>We have organised telephone surveys to check the experience of patients and their families, particularly with the increase in telephone and virtual appointments. This is allowing a structured conversation to give us valuable feedback. We are using PALS, our Interpreters and we will be training volunteers to assist with this task. We are also telephoning a sample of patients who DNA to find the reasons behind this.</p>
	<p>We will shortly introduce a new Team Leader post to our PALS service in order to further ensure that we have consistent standards and someone with an overview of the daily flow.</p>	<p>Our PALS & Patient Experience Team Leader post was advertised in March but delayed due to Covid-19. We have recently shortlisted and will interview later in July 2020 for this important role. A key task for the post holder will be to ensure quality and equity of access across the service.</p>

	<p>We are seeking to arrange shadowing shifts with one of our PALS team and similar members of PALS teams at UHB and BSMHFT. We will also offer this shadowing opportunity to their staff. We hope that this might share good practice, highlight useful measures we could adopt and also improve pathways for clients who are moving from BWC to BSMHFT or through BWC to UHB, and reverse.</p>	<p>These shadowing sessions took place in the first two months of 2020. Our PALS Team reported back to our PALS Huddle and to our Patient Experience Group Sessions. They found the shadowing really helpful to share ideas and to have an understanding of each PALS service in order to safely pass clients between services when problems occur across Trusts.</p>
	<p>We will work with our advocacy agencies to improve the offer of a helpful intervention which families and patients can view as 'being on their side' acknowledging that our PALS team work for BWC Trust. We have also recently established sessions at the Children's Hospital with CONTACT charity for disabled children, and hope to expand upon this if funding allows.</p>	<p>We were delighted to expand our sessions across the three components of our Trust's services - Children's, Women's and Forward Thinking Birmingham. These drop-in information and advice sessions included Healthwatch, CONTACT and were due to expand further when Covid-19 struck. We are seeking to offer online sessions soon and we have shared the first Healthwatch Virtual Coffee Morning.</p>
	<p>We will check operating procedures and ensure a named contact is given to each client where casework follows. We will seek to agree a timeframe where we are able, at least for when our initial response will occur. We will remind staff to ensure the offer of a female PALS officer wherever possible, if this is preferred.</p>	<p>All staff in our PALS Team have agreed common administrative procedures in order to handle cases swiftly. They have also spent time learning the service at each site so that cases can be picked up by any staff member. Our male PALS officer understands the need to explain that a female PALS Officer can be requested if preferred.</p>
	<p>We note that the Trust undertook some work to improve the PALS service prior to our report in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised operating procedures to streamline the way we handle concerns, 	<p>We are pleased to report that this work has allowed us to respond well during Covid-19 with no interruptions to our service.</p> <p>We continue to work with senior staff to</p>

	<p>escalate issues and track responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised our contact centre to ensure that all calls and emails to the PALS service at BWC are handled as effectively as possible and logged immediately. • Improved our systems for tracking queries and following through with progress calls to clients and reminders to management where issues are taking longer to resolve. • Trained PALS staff in mental health issues and how to better handle enquiries from our Forward Thinking Birmingham service, this has included education sessions and a regular supervision session. • Arranged an Away day with the whole team to look at ways that PALS, Volunteering Services and Interpreting Services can work together more to enhance patient experience. 	<p>address areas where responses to PALS queries are delayed. We have introduced direct feedback from our PALS Team into the twice-weekly Governance Meetings. These are chaired by our Chief Medical Officer or Chief Nurse and this is helping to place a high priority on the swiftest resolution.</p> <p>Training on mental health issues and the shadowing of BSMHFT's PALS service have both helped us to give a sensitive service to our mental health clients.</p> <p>We have held two full Patient Experience Team sessions. They have helped generate increased cross-working and a Patient Experience Volunteer Role. We are committed to continuing these despite social distancing and we now have weekly full team meetings through Zoom online.</p>
	<p>Other positive outcomes for patients and the trust.</p>	<p>We will review our PALS service when we have appointed our new Team Leader and we intend to launch a helpline-style service within the PALS structure for those facing barriers accessing virtual appointments.</p>

Appendix: Trust responses

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Key questions from HWB to Trust	Response received from Trust	Trust's evidence for actions taken
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	<p>The Trust recognises the report's observations regarding PALS' staff knowledge of different needs, including autism, and is currently organising autism awareness training and additional mental health awareness to help equip staff to have a better understanding of patients' needs</p>	<p>The PALS manager has attended training on recognising mental health issues within the staff team. Mental Health awareness training has also been provided to the team. Further training for staff members on mental health awareness and autism are being planned although this has been delayed in recent months (COVID-19).</p>

	<p>and the difficulties they experience when accessing healthcare services.</p>	<p>The Trust's lead nurse for older adults is undertaking a review of all feedback received regarding dementia (including PALS, complaints, FFT, surveys and related qualitative (free text) data).</p> <p>Senior Trust staff are working closely with the regional Birmingham Youth Network on healthcare (including mental health) to support the Trust's own Young Persons' Council in representing youth and transition in the Trust.</p>
	<p>The Trust acknowledges that there are further opportunities to improve the accessibility of the service and plan to implement a single Patient Relations Contact Centre with resource deployed to enable calls to be answered more promptly; while also maintaining face-to-face contact on the Heartlands, Good Hope and Queen Elizabeth hospital sites.</p>	<p>The Trust has now merged the PALS service of the Queen Elizabeth hospital with the other sites to create a single contact centre which now covers all Trust sites. Calls are answered within 5 seconds on average ensuring that waits for PALS support is minimised for patients, carers and relatives.</p>
	<p>The Trust understands the importance and the value that survey respondents and the wider public have in the PALS service and is committed to ensuring that the service is appropriately resourced to ensure it can manage all concerns received quickly, effectively and with the sensitivity required.</p>	<p>The PALS service is now experiencing a rise in contacts due to the gradual reduction in the COVID-19 related issues. The contact centre is now centralised, well-resourced entirely able to respond to the volume of calls and queries received from patients carers and relatives.</p> <p>Within the same department the PALS team have the support of the Patient Experience team, Complaints team and the Carer Co-ordinator service.</p>

	<p>The Trust receives around 10,000 pieces of feedback each month which helps to understand the patient experience and make improvements to services. For the PALS service specifically, enquirers are contacted prior to their enquiry being closed on our system to check whether their queries have been resolved. As a result of the Healthwatch report, the Trust will implement a further evaluation process to seek specific feedback on the PALS service from users of the service to gauge the level of satisfaction and highlight any potential areas for improvement.</p>	<p>PALS continue to be a vital tool in understanding the experiences of patients, carers and relatives. This is supported through a range of other methods across the Trust employed by the Patient Experience team (qualitative and quantitative), the Carer Co-ordinator service and the Trust's networks of patient councils</p>
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	<p>At present, SWB does not collect data about a complainant/ patient or relative's demographics, unless they are also using the services themselves. This is something under consideration in order to be able to see and open a dialogue with those potential clients that may not be being reached with our current advertising</p>	<p>A demographics questionnaire has been developed and is ready to launch, expected to be in place during Quarter 3 2020 onwards.</p> <p>In addition, the Head of Complaints is developing a Patient Panel with invitations sent to former complainants. This is also</p>

	<p>methods (such as posters / social media/leaflets). The opportunity and means to raise a concern, should they wish to do so, needs to be available for everyone. For those patient groups that do not raise many concerns, a community outreach programme started in March 2019 to reach those who may not realise that they can speak to someone through PALS or Purple Point if they have a concern with treatment in our services, or just to ask a question in relation to their care. A number of local community groups have been approached and visited to demonstrate that help and assistance is available to all, should they have the need to use it. This engagement will continue into 2020 and beyond, to ensure that we are reaching as many patients and potential users of services as possible.</p>	<p>open to all those met through the Community engagement undertaken since March 2019.</p> <p>Community engagement work continues via email during the Covid-19 period, and it is hoped can be re-started in person later in the year.</p>
	<p>The Trust Board has requested the collating of a Patient Voice Dashboard which is currently under development. This report will advise the Board of the position in each clinical service, through the patient's own feedback. Triangulating data from FFT feedback, PALS, Purple Point and Complaints amongst other measures. This is in the early stages of development and should enable the Trust to better respond to issues arising, address any arising hot spots at the earliest opportunity or respond to patient feedback in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The Patient Voice dashboard is now presented to Trust Board on a quarterly basis. This document triangulates data from FFT feedback, PALS, Purple Point and Complaints and other measures such as NHS Choices in order to highlight areas of concern or hot spots at the earliest opportunity.</p>

	<p>During Quarter 3 of 2017, the generic complaint questionnaire was stood down in order to consider other, possibly more fruitful, feedback methods and establish which route may work best for our local demographic area. The work to develop an automated questionnaire to gather complaints and Purple Point feedback has been completed and as of June 2019 SWB has text feedback questionnaires in place for both complaints and Purple Point, and consideration is therefore now being given to expanding that to include PALS cases each month. This feedback will give us valuable information as to how we can further improve the PALS and Purple Point service.</p>	<p>The text survey was introduced for all Complaints and Purple Point cases from June 2019 to May 2020. To replace these surveys, and as a result of a low response rate, an e-survey has been developed and has been in place since May 2020 onwards. Initial data suggests the response rate remains poor, however other methods are under review.</p> <p>As a result of Covid-19 it has yet to be decided whether to roll out this survey to all closed PALS cases in addition to the Purple Point and Complaints, as focus has been on improving the response rate initially. Once an improvement in the response rate has been achieved, further roll out can then be considered.</p>
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Appendix: Trust responses

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

Key questions from HWB to Trust	Response received from Trust	Trust's evidence for actions taken
<p>1. How will the feedback in this report be used by the trust to make improvements to PALS/Customer Services with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issues that led to dissatisfaction among service users • The issues that service users indicated needed to be improved to make the service more effective <p>2. What actions will be taken by the trust to improve patient and public involvement (PPI) in order to hear more feedback from service users?</p> <p>3. How will the feedback in this report help the trust to design a process that ensures that the trust is hearing enough feedback from service users to understand their experiences and make improvements to the service based on that experience?</p>	<p>Arrange a communications campaign to remind staff of the importance of service user confidentiality and ways that we can achieve this.</p>	<p>Communications campaign has been implemented via Data Protection Officer to include within Information Governance Awareness sessions, a dedicated article will be included within August 2020 digital trust newsletter, screensavers will be implemented across all Trust PCs to remind staff.</p>
	<p>Through internal communication and advertisements, BSMHFT will share with all staff a signposting portal to be provided from Autism West Midlands to enhance staff's recognition and understanding of Autism.</p>	<p>This has been shared Trust wide via 'lessons learnt bulletins' and also via Clinical Governance Committees.</p>
	<p>Information data to be audited and devised for service users without a selected communication preference, to ensure that 'patient choice' is being adhered to appropriately within the organisation.</p>	<p>This action is completed. Current results are 40% improvement in completion of communication preference, which as a result has indicated clearer correspondence with service users in line with BSMHFT Trust value 'Patient Choice'.</p>
	<p>Customer Relations Lead to create a more innovative survey technique to capture further feedback for learning</p>	<p>Process implemented via complaints process to inform complainants at the start of the investigation of an email feedback form which will be sent upon completion of the complaint.</p>
	<p>Away day to be arranged for PALS officers to visit other NHS Trusts to look at techniques and practices available to enhance the service user experience</p>	<p>Complete - PALS Officers have shared learning. BSMHFT have attended UHB and UHB have attended BSMHFT.</p>

	Other positive outcomes for patients and the trust	PHSO attendance CMHT service user leaflet Bespoke culturally sensitive PALS group Remote PALS surgeries Family Support Service Reduction in comparable yearly data for PALS concerns converted to registered complaints Easy read complaints policy available Continuation 'You said we did' posters
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Appendix: Trust responses

West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust

As a result of the PALS report the ambulance service reviewed the following service areas and implemented the following actions:

- We will ensure that a reference number at the point of telephone contact is provided to the contact to ensure they have something to refer to if they wish to call the PALS/Patient Experience Team.

I can confirm all members of the Patient Experience Team are aware to provide the reference number verbally or confirm in writing or by email.

- If a member of the public contact WMAS PALS team and we are unable to assist as a hospital query, the team will be advised to either take the details and pass to the hospital or provide contact details for the person to contact directly, whichever method they would prefer.

This is common practice, the team is encouraged to offer to contact the other provider on behalf of the complainant.

- The Patient Experience Team or Investigating officers will endeavour to keep the contact up to date with the investigation process in a timely fashion.

This will continue to be completed where possible.

- The Trust will twice a year survey people who have contacted PALS to see how they found their experience to allow learning to take place and improve the service where needed.

We will be looking to survey people who have contacted PALS in October 2020 and April 2021.

- Ensure that a you said we did section is added to the Trust website

This is noted in the Patient Experience Annual Report which is available on the Patient Experience Section of the website.

The Trust will continue with its work to engage with patients, carers and members of the public in the hospital environment and via the patient survey and the Friends and Family Test question'

The Trust conducted a real time survey of patients using the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service in 2019/20 and the following points were noted:

You Said	We Did
Issues with getting through to the control room	Key Performance Indicators do not indicate an issue however the data will be reviewed further to see if anything further can be identified KPIs have been achieved on all contracts for call answering
Suspension in vehicle is uncomfortable	This comment will be fed into our vehicle design group by the nominated manager for the group. The vehicle design group is represented by staff side representatives who are all operational staff.
Regular drivers for regular runs	Regular drivers will be assigned where possible for renal patients for instance as they travel three times a week. However, the driver will be different if sickness or holiday.
Drivers not starting early enough to undertake journeys	Rotas will be reviewed against activity to see if this indicates shift times are not in line with demand.

Appendix: Trust responses

Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust welcomes the Healthwatch Birmingham draft report following feedback from patients and carers on experiences of contacting PALS services in Birmingham. The report is very timely, as we are about to review and update our current Advice and Liaison Service (Customer Service) Working Guidelines. The feedback has been very useful to us in reflecting on how our service is doing and where we can make improvements. We have carried out the actions below as agreed in the Healthwatch Birmingham Dec 2019 PALS report. Due to Covid-19, some of our actions are on-going.

- We now have in place a named handler for every caller, who maintain contact throughout a live enquiry, except where there is annual leave / sickness of member of staff. Caller are given name of person on first contact of whom that person is.
- Confidentiality and consent is discussed in detail on first contact and an integral part of working guidelines
- Regularity of update during a live enquiry is discussed and agreed with caller on the initial call and is documented
- On-going work with all our services to improve response time to our enquiries, escalation part of working guidelines and delays picked up during monthly audits. We work closely with clinical services where we are made aware of any changes to services, so we can respond to any callers with up to date information and clarity on what the situation is.
- Work around improving our presence on website and development of posters / information, unfortunately has been on hold with the COVID pandemic, something we will be picking up in next few months
- `You said we did information` is shared with clinical services via monthly reports and in Patient Experience reports which go to Trust Board
- Co-design work around Advice and Liaison Service evaluation / feedback forms again has been delayed during COVID pandemic

Appendix: Trust responses

The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

In response to the report we identified the following key elements for improvement

- Better staff attitudes and understanding of health conditions, especially autism and similar conditions
- More responsive and proactive in following up enquiries
- More involvement of service users in improving the service

PALS dissatisfaction

- Lack of response and being ignored
- Failure to understand the issues being raised

PALS satisfaction

- Being treated with kindness

Key questions from HWB to Trust	Response received from Trust	Trust's evidence for actions taken
<p>1. How will the feedback in this report be used by the trust to make improvements to PALS/Customer Services with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issues that led to dissatisfaction among service users • The issues that service users indicated needed to be improved to make the service more effective 	<p>We will respond to PALS enquires in a timely fashion to all communication from patients and service users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New staff - New system and processes were put in place. - Every email, answerphone messages or letters were acknowledged within 2 working days from receiving as per our Policy - KPIs have been at 100% since March 2020
<p>2. What actions will be taken by the trust to improve patient and public involvement (PPI) in order to hear more feedback from service users?</p>	<p>All patients can expect that the PALS department will act to serve the patient and service user.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New system and processes in place. - If patient called, sent an email or left answerphone message with PALS with any concerns regarding any clinician, that concern is escalated and Clinical

3. How will the feedback in this report help the trust to design a process that ensures that the trust is hearing enough feedback from service users to understand their experiences and make improvements to the service based on that experience?		<p>Service Managers contacting patient and resolving their concerns with clinician.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All departments within the Trust acts on concerns raised by patients. - Trust Values of Respect to be adhered to.
	All complaints should be appropriately handled within Trust agreed timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As from March 2020 internal and external KPIs were 100% - All formal complaints were acknowledged within 3 working days and responded within 25 working days from being received into the department. - All PALS concerns or enquiries were acknowledged within 2 working days and responded within agreed date with patient.
	We will provide wayfinding in a format that is appropriate to their need to patients who contact us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have a very similar name to another major NHS orthopaedic provider. This does cause confusion for patients and service users at times. - Where there is confusion around a contact details for either a department within our Trust or an external provider we will endeavor to help find the information for the patient or service user. - If necessary information will be provided in alternate formats
	Our Patient Experience Team will always endeavour to answer the phone. Extend our opening hours to cover 0800hrs to 1700hrs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is one extra team member - The office is open Monday to Friday 0800hrs to 1700hrs - If there is no one in the office, patient can leave message on answerphone

	<p>We will have robust processes in place that will deliver robust initial actions, initial feedback to patients and service users and ultimately a complaint response within 25 working days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All contacts are contacted once we have an answer and all PALS concerns are tracked on the system and closed once someone contacted the, with response (CSM, Senior manager)
	<p>Better staff attitudes and understanding of health conditions, especially autism and similar conditions.</p> <p>All Trust staff will live the Trust Values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust Values of Compassion, Openness and Respect should be present at all times in communication and action with our patients and service users.
	<p>More involvement of service users in improving the service</p> <p>We will learn from complaints and PALS contacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every PALS concern and complaint has impact on services and its improvement. We analyse themes and trends on monthly basis and then work on service improvement. - Patients can be more involved through our Patient and Carers Forum. - Complaints have an action plan both from initial review and following formal complaints response.



Healthwatch Birmingham

PO Box 16875

Birmingham,

B16 6TN

www.healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk

e: info@healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk

t: 0800 652 5278

[@HWBrum](https://twitter.com/HWBrum) | [f facebook.com/HealthwatchBirmingham](https://facebook.com/HealthwatchBirmingham)