Your right to complain

The Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure
Section One:
What do I do if I want to complain?

Why is it important to complain?
If you are not happy with the care, service or treatment you have received from the National Health Service (NHS), it is important that you tell the people responsible, as they can only put things right if you let them know what is wrong. Complaints can often help us improve the services we give to future service users. You will not be treated any differently because you have made a complaint.

What a complaint can and cannot do
The Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure can only deal with certain matters; it is therefore important to think about what you want to achieve before making a complaint.

Under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure, organisations can:

- Undertake a thorough investigation and offer an explanation for what happened
- Offer an apology
- Improve future services
- Take action to put matters right.

Under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure, organisations cannot:

- Offer you financial compensation, but sometimes small one-off payments may be made, such as for lost property
- Discipline staff
- ‘Strike off’ a doctor, or other health professional
- Look at complaints about private treatment.

Who do I speak to in the first instance?
Many concerns and problems may easily be resolved within your healthcare team. If you have concerns, we ask that in the first instance, you discuss these with a member of your healthcare team.

If you are still unhappy
If after speaking to your healthcare team you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to:

- Discuss the issue with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Coordinator within the Patient Advice and Complaints Team (see page 11)
- Speak to the Complaints Manager
- Write to the Chief Executive of the Trust
- Speak / write to the Care Quality Commission (contact details on page 12 of this leaflet)
- Speak / write to your local service commissioner the Clinical Commissioning Group (contact details on page 12 of this leaflet)
Can someone complain for me, or can I complain for someone else?

If you feel anxious about making a complaint yourself, you can ask a relative, friend, advocate or carer to complain on your behalf. The Trust may ask this person whether they have had your permission (consent) to do this.

Healthwatch offers a free, professional support service to those wishing to pursue a formal complaint against the NHS. Details of how to contact Healthwatch are given on page 11 of this booklet.

Consent is not needed in situations where the person is not able to give it. The issue of consent will be discussed in more detail with you by the Complaints Manager.

Please see the consent form on page 8 of this leaflet.

Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

You should normally complain:

- Within twelve months of the incident you are concerned about, or
- Within twelve months of you finding out that there was something to complain about.

It is better to make contact with the Trust as soon as possible, as memories will be fresher and it will be easier to investigate the facts. The Trust’s Complaints Manager could give discretion to extend the time limit if there is a good reason why a concern / complaint could not be raised sooner.

Section 2: Making a complaint – how do I start?

How do I make a verbal complaint?

You can contact the Complaints Manager by telephone during normal office hours to make a verbal complaint. The Complaints Manager will listen to your concerns, asking questions as appropriate, and will make a typed account of your complaint. This will be sent to you to check for accuracy and to sign. You will have the opportunity to make any necessary alterations before returning it...
to us. Once we have received your signed copy of the complaint, the complaints procedure will begin.

**How do I make a written complaint and what should I include?**

You do not need to write a very long and detailed letter, but you should include all the points you want to complain about. If you are unable to put your complaint in writing, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or Healthwatch can help you. See page 11 for their contact details. You should tell us:

- Who or what you are complaining about; try to make clear the most important points. If you are complaining about a member of staff, please give their name and job title if you know it
- Where and when the events you are complaining about happened
- What you have already done about your complaint, if anything
- What you hope the outcome of your complaint will be.

If you wish to complain about more than one part of health or social services, for example two different NHS Trusts or a GP and a Trust, you can, if you wish, write to each of the relevant organisations.

Joint working, however, is deemed to be good practice; therefore, if you are sending a written complaint, you should address your complaint to one of the organisations, who will approach the other organisation and a joint response will be formulated. All the organisations should work together in the investigation and resolution of the complaint. You will be given the name of the link person investigating your complaint. For further information/guidance, contact the Trust’s Complaints Manager/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

**Can I access my health records?**

If your complaint is about your health treatment, you may wish to obtain a copy of your health records to find out more about the background to your complaint and to confirm the factual details. There may be a charge for this. You have a right to see your health records under the Data Protection Act 1998. For further information about accessing your health records, you should contact either the Information Governance Manager (telephone 01302 796189), or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) (telephone 0800 015 4334).
Here is a sample letter of complaint

Your name
Address
Telephone number(s)

Date

Chief Executive
Name of Trust
Address

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: (insert patient’s name, address and date of birth)

I am writing to complain about (issues of concern), at (place where concerns relate to – for example, ward 1 at x hospital). If the complaint relates to a member of staff, please include as much detail as possible (name, job title if known, and shift or time of day/night when incident/issues arose).

Include details of what happened, where it happened, when it occurred and include the names and positions of all individuals involved.

If your complaint refers to a number of issues or concerns, please list what you feel to be the most important ones first.

Include details of what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint – for example, an apology, an explanation, action to put things right, reassurance that the same issue will not happen again.

I would like my complaint to be addressed using the Trust’s complaints procedure and look forward to receiving your reply.

(continued overleaf)
If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, please ensure that you enclose a signed consent form with your letter of complaint.

If you would like a meeting to be arranged to discuss your concerns further, please also mention this in your letter.

_Yours faithfully,_

Name (signature)
Name (printed)

Enclosures (for example, a consent form).
COMPLAINT CONSENT FORM

I, (name) ..................................................................................................................

of (address) .............................................................................................................

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of (named person) .....................................................................................................

of (named person’s address) ........................................................................................

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to pursue the complaint on my/our behalf and I agree that the staff may disclose
(only in so far as it is necessary to answer the complaint) confidential information
about me/my care/treatment.

Signature ........................................................................................................ Date.........................
Section 3: What happens next?

The two stages of the Complaints Procedure

The Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure has two possible stages:

- Local resolution
- Review by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Local resolution

How long will it take?
When you make a complaint, the Chief Executive of the Trust should send you an acknowledgment letter within three working days.

We expect most complaints to be responded to within 25-40 working days from receiving the complaint. However, complex complaints may take longer than this to carry out a thorough investigation.

If you find that the process is taking a long time, you may feel frustrated and annoyed and want to give up, but try to keep going as that is the only way you can make sure that matters will be resolved. The person investigating the complaint will keep you informed how the complaint investigation is progressing.

Could a meeting be arranged?
In looking into your complaint, the Complaints Manager may offer to meet you with the member of staff who is investigating your complaint. Alternatively, you may contact the Complaints Manager to request that a meeting is arranged. Should you choose to meet with us, it may be helpful to have someone with you at the meeting to provide support, such as a relative or friend.

We are able to arrange for an interpreter and other communication support if this is required.

What happens if I am not satisfied with the response from the Chief Executive / Trust?
If you are not happy with the response to your complaint, please let the Complaints Manager know that you are still not satisfied and explain why. Please tell the Complaints Manager the questions you would still like answered and what you would like to happen next. For example, you may wish to ask for a meeting with particular people if this has not yet been tried, or you may request some information about what we are doing to put things right and to improve the service for other people.
Review by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

If, following investigation by the Trust, you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you have the right to take the matter up with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

This Ombudsman investigates complaints about the NHS. However, before they look into your complaint, they will usually expect you to have completed the NHS complaints procedure, unless they decide that, in your particular circumstances, it would be unreasonable for you to do so. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is independent of the NHS and the Government, and there is no charge for this service. The contact details for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman can be found on page 12 of this booklet.
Section 4: Contact details

Complaints Manager
Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber
NHS Foundation Trust
Woodfield House
Tickhill Road Site, Balby
Doncaster DN4 8QN.
Telephone 01302 796201/796700
Fax 01302 796003.

The Chief Executive
Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber
NHS Foundation Trust
Woodfield House
Tickhill Road Site, Balby
Doncaster DN4 8QN.
Telephone 01302 796400
Fax 01302 796715.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
PALS Coordinator
Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber
NHS Foundation Trust
Woodfield House
Tickhill Road Site, Balby
Doncaster DN4 8QN.
Telephone 0800 015 4334
Fax 01302 796003.
Email pals@rdash.nhs.uk

Healthwatch
Doncaster
Telephone 01302 378935
Email info@healthwatchdoncaster.org.uk

Rotherham
Telephone 01709 717130
Email info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk

North Lincolnshire
Telephone 01724 844986
Email nlica@carersfederation.co.uk

North East Lincolnshire
Telephone 01472 269666
Email healthwatchnel@nbforum.org.uk

Manchester
Telephone: 08444 170 411
Email: info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk
Your right to complain

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP.

Telephone 0345 015 4033
Fax 0300 061 4000.
Email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website www.ombudsman.org.uk

Care Quality Commission
National Correspondence
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4PA.

Telephone 03000 616161.
Email enquiries@cqc.org.uk

For further information please contact:

PALS Coordinator
Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
Woodfield House
Tickhill Road Site, Balby
Doncaster DN4 8QN.

Email: pals@rdash.nhs.uk or
Telephone: 0800 015 4334
Facsimile: 01302 796003
Visit our website: www.rdash.nhs.uk

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
NHS Doncaster CCG
Sovereign House
Heavens Walk
Doncaster, South Yorkshire
DN4 5HZ

Telephone: 01302 566300
Email: enquiries@doncasterccg.nhs.uk

NHS Rotherham CCG
Oak House
Moorhead Way
Bramley
Rotherham
South Yorkshire S66 1YY

Telephone: 01709 302000
Email: rotherhamccg@rotherham.nhs.uk
North Lincolnshire CCG
Health Place
Wrawby Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8GS

Tel: 01652 251000
Email: NLCCG.ContactUs@nhs.net

North East Lincolnshire CCG
Athena Building
Saxon Court
Gilbey Road
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN31 2UJ

Telephone: 0300 3000 400
Email address: nelccg.askus@nhs.net

Central Manchester CCG
Parkway Business Centre
Princess Road
Manchester
M14 7LU

Telephone: 0161 765 4000
Website: www.centralmanchesterccg.nhs.uk/

North Manchester CCG
Third Floor, Newton Silk Mill
Holyoak Street, Newton Heath
Manchester
M40 1HA
Telephone: 0161 219 9497
Email: nmccg.nmccg@nhs.net
Website: www.northmanchesterccg.nhs.uk/

Area’s covered: Ancoats & Clayton, Bradford, Charlestown, Cheetham, parts of the City Centre, Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley, Miles Platting & Newton Heath and Moston.

South Manchester CCG
Parkway 3
Parkway Business Centre
Princess Road, Manchester
M14 7LU

Telephone: 0161 765 4000
Website: www.southmanchesterccg.nhs.uk/

Area’s covered: Fallowfield, Old Moat, Withington, Burnage, Chorlton Park, Didsbury East, Didsbury West, Northenden, Brooklands, Baguley, Sharston, Woodhouse Park.
If you would like this in large print, braille or on audiotape or would like this document in an alternative language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 015 4334.

Amharic

Arabic

Bengali

Cantonese (traditional Chinese)

Czech

Farsi

French

Kurdish Sorani

Polish

Punjabi

Somali

Turkish

Urdu

Vietnamese

This information is correct at the time of publishing

Last Reviewed: August 2015