

The Patient Experience of the NHS Complaints System: 2016

We spoke to **865** people, asking them to express their views and experiences of the NHS Complaints Process in Hertfordshire.

What we found:



Only 2 out of 10 Trusts and Commissioners had an easy read version of their complaints process on their website.



9 out of 10 organisations stated that they receive little to no complaints directly from Children and Young People. With 5 out of 10 organisations noting this as a gap in collecting feedback.



Nearly half of all complaints stated they found the NHS complaints process complicated and complex.



More than 50% of people wouldn't know to whom they can complain.



Compared to the 6% whom had made a complaint in the last 12 months, double that had wanted to make a complaint but not done so. 45% stated the reason for this was they didn't feel it will make a difference; 23% felt they didn't have the support and 19% were worried it would have an adverse effect on their care or treatment.



49% of Young people stated they had wanted to complain but not done so. This group was shown as less likely to complain compared to adults, citing similar reasons as the adults, but also stressed 'not feeling listened to (33%)'.



Complainants highlighted that organisations did not comply to their own established procedures when dealing with a complaint, which made things more confusing.



Complainants' experiences of the complaints process contradicted the way complaint handling should work.



People wanted more publicity and information around complaints

We have suggested ten recommendations for Providers and Commissioners to consider. These recommendations aim to be practical and achievable.

1. Ensure your complaints policy and/or information on what complainants can expect from the complaints process are made available on your website; without the potential complainant having to request this from the organisation.
2. Ensure that information on their complaints process is made accessible to vulnerable groups and people with complex needs.
3. Adopt a 'You said, we did' approach to publishing the outcome of complaints, lessons learnt and providing evidence that changes have been made. This information to be easily visible and accessible to the public.
4. Ensure collection and triangulation of patient feedback from a variety of sources, to further inform data from the formal complaints route.
5. Make it clear to the public how they can feed back concerns without always having to go through the formal complaints process.
6. Those organisations that use a Patient Advice and Liaison Service: To ensure that it is made clear to the public what PALS stands for, what it does and how to access the service.
7. Further explore ways of collecting comments, concerns and complaints through mediums such as social media.
8. Ensure advice and advocacy services are promoted and made aware to the complainant before or at the initial stages of making a complaint; consider providing this information on your website.
9. All organisations to promote independent organisations - such as Healthwatch - so that people have a way of raising a concern whilst feeling confident that it won't impact on their care or treatment; consider providing this information on your website.
10. Consider the introduction of a six monthly, or 12 monthly independent audit of complaints handling.

How to Make an NHS Complaint in Hertfordshire

We've designed this flow chart to help you when you want to make an NHS or Social Care complaint. Just follow the arrows to see who and how to contact the most appropriate organisation.

If you have concerns about any aspect of your care, or the service you receive, it is best to first speak with a member of staff involved with your care

Do you need help making a complaint?

If you find that staff cannot help you, or you are not comfortable speaking with them, you may want to make a formal complaint...

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service: POhWER
0300 456 2370
pohwer@pohwer.net

I would like to make a complaint about my care or treatment

Social Care

Residential Care
Home Care
Carers' Services
Children's Services

Primary Care

GP
Dentist
Pharmacy
Optician

Other Health Care

Hospital
Ambulance
Mental Health
Community
NHS Commissioning

Hertfordshire County Council
0300 123 4040
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/help/helpwithcomplaintsform (web form contact)

Contact the Primary Care Service to find out how to make a formal complaint

NHS England
0300 311 22 33
england.contactus@nhs.net

Contact the PALS team to find out how to make a formal complaint

The Local Government Ombudsman
0300 061 0614
www.lgo.org.uk (web form contact)

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
0345 015 4033
Phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

PALS is a confidential NHS service designed to support patients, relatives and carers

Lister Hospital New QEII
Hertford County Hospital
Mount Vernon Cancer Centre
01438 285811
pals.enh-tr@nhs.net

Watford Hospital
Hemel Hempstead Hospital
St Albans City Hospital
01923 217 198
info@whht.nhs.uk

Princess Alexandra Hospital
01279 827211
pals@pah.nhs.uk

Barnet Hospital and Chase Farm Hospital
020 8216 4924
bcfpals@nhs.net

Royal Free
0207 472 6446/
0207 472 6447
rf.pals@nhs.uk

East of England Ambulance Service
0800 028 3382
eoeasnt.feedback.nhs.net

Herts Partnership Foundation Trust
01707 253 916
pals.herts@hpftr.nhs.uk

Herts Community Trust
0800 011 6113
pals.hchs@nhs.uk

I would like to make a complaint about purchasing or planning of NHS services

Contact HVCCG or ENHCCG depending on the area

Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group - HVCCG
01442 898865
hvccgpatientfeedback@nhs.net

East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group - ENHCCG
01707 369697
enhccg.quality@nhs.net

Please contact Healthwatch Hertfordshire if you have any questions or comments about this information.
Telephone: 01707 275 978
info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk

