

## Mystery Shopping Report - Making complaints to health and social care organisations within Lancashire

A report summarising the results of a mystery shopping project where Healthwatch Lancashire representatives attempted to find information about how to make a complaint to health and social care organisations within Lancashire.



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## **Introduction**

Through its programme of engagement, Healthwatch Lancashire has identified an issue with members of the public who use health and adult social care services in accessing information should they wish to make a complaint.

One of Healthwatch Lancashire's statutory responsibilities is to provide advice and information to residents of Lancashire about how to access local care services so that people can make their own choices. A significant part of providing this advice and information is signposting individuals to organisations so that they can share their feedback or raise a complaint.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> August and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Healthwatch Lancashire completed a mystery shopping activity to look at the information provided by health and social care organisations in Lancashire in relation to raising a complaint.

Thirteen Healthwatch Lancashire volunteers and staff contacted fifteen organisations. A total of twenty-six different telephone numbers were called.

## **Methodology**

The project was undertaken by Healthwatch Lancashire volunteers and staff.

The following question was posed to each of the organisations listed below via a telephone call. Those undertaking the activity did not disclose themselves as Healthwatch Lancashire representatives.

Could you let me know how to make a complaint?

*If representatives were asked about the nature of the complaint, they were asked to state that they just wanted the information at this stage so that they could decide whether to pursue it further.*

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives called some organisations more than once to identify whether the information provided was consistent. Fifty-three calls were made in total to the 26 establishments.

Representatives recorded responses to the questions immediately after the telephone call.

Prior to undertaking the mystery shopping activity, Healthwatch Lancashire mapped and contacted the health and social care services as listed below:

- **NHS England**

NHS England is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department of Health. NHS England oversees the budget, planning, delivery and day-to-day operation of the commissioning side of the NHS in England as set out in the Health and Social Care Act

2012. It holds the contracts for GPs and NHS dentists. Therefore, NHS England is the organisation to contact should anyone wish to complain about primary care services such as GPs, dentists, opticians or pharmacy services.

- **Lancashire County Council**

Lancashire County Council's Social Care Service is the main authority for social care and social services in Lancashire. Therefore, Lancashire County Council is the organisation to contact should anyone wish to complain about adult social care.

- **Clinical Commissioning Groups**

Clinical Commissioning Groups are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area.

- NHS East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS North Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Greater Preston Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group

- **Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit**

Commissioning Support Units provide a wide range of commissioning support services that enable clinical commissioners to focus their clinical expertise and leadership in securing the best outcomes for patients and driving up quality of NHS patient services. Four of the clinical commissioning groups within Lancashire, listed above, use the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit to handle their complaints. NHS Greater Preston Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group handle their own complaints.

- **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**

Lancashire Care Foundation Trust provides a range health and wellbeing services. The health services provided include community nursing, health visiting and a range of therapy services including physiotherapy, podiatry and speech and language. Wellbeing services provided include smoking cessation and healthy lifestyle services. The Trust specialises in mental health inpatient and community mental health services.

- **Hospital Trusts**

- ***East Lancashire area***

- For **East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust**, we contacted:

- East Lancashire Hospitals Trust- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) number

- Royal Blackburn Hospital – switchboard number
- Burnley General Hospital – switchboard number
- Accrington Victoria Hospital – direct number
- Pendle Community Hospital – switchboard number
- Clitheroe Community Hospital – direct number

***North Lancashire area***

For **University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust**, we contacted:

- Queen Victoria Hospital, Morecambe - direct number and PALS number
- Royal Lancaster Infirmary - direct number

For **Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**, we contacted:

- Fleetwood Hospital – direct number
- Blackpool Victoria Hospital - switchboard number
- Clifton Hospital – direct number

***Central Lancashire area***

For **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**, we contacted:

- Royal Preston Hospital – direct number and PALS number
- Chorley and South Ribble District General Hospital – direct number and PALS number

***West Lancashire area***

For **Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals Trust**, we contacted:

- Ormskirk and District General Hospital – direct number
- Southport and Formby District General Hospital - direct number

**Summary of staff and volunteer experiences:**

- Forty-eight contacts were answered at the first telephone attempt.
- Five contacts received a recorded message on the first attempt: Of these, two contacts asked callers to leave their name and number, one contact was directed to the Trust website or to leave a message. On the second attempt, two of the calls were answered and the third contact was answered on the third attempt.
- Two contacts received a recorded message with no additional information

**NHS England**

**Tel: 0300 311 2233 – Customer Contact Centre**

**3 calls were made by 3 representatives**

**Summary**

Of the three calls made, one representative felt that they were given sufficient information to pursue their complaint further. One representative was signposted to both the local hospital and the local clinical commissioning group as they had responded that their complaint was about a hospital. The third representative hung up after listening to the long-pre-recorded message.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"It was suggested that if I wanted to, I should contact the service provider directly first to try to resolve the complaint locally. If not, I could contact the Customer Contact Centre by phone or email outlining the complaint. They would assign a case worker and get my side of the story and the service provider's and then try to resolve."*

*"I got a long-detailed message about their services and who you might call. When the message said, we can help you make a complaint, hold for an advisor who will assist you to make your complaint and follow it up, I was transferred but it just kept ringing for 2-3 minutes so I hung up. Personally, I dislike recorded messages and instructions and would feel in this instance that I couldn't be bothered. It's too complicated and there is too much information on one message."*

**Lancashire County Council**

**Tel: 0300 123 6720 - Switchboard**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

The calls of two representatives were answered after four minutes and nine minutes respectively. One representative was provided with just the email address to make a complaint. Neither representative was directed to the website.

**Comment by representative:**

*"I was told to put my issues in writing to the designated complaints officer at Adult Social Care in Preston. I was given the address. I don't feel the information provided was helpful as I had to probe and push for information. The call handler wanted the information for 'her team' to deal with, and kept saying "put it in writing." When asked about time scales and how long they would take to reply, she did not know and just said ASAP, depending on the complaint. The call handler was polite and was trying to help, but I felt that they did not know the procedure well enough and it was very evident. I did not feel confident in the information given. The call handler did not mention the advocacy service which, in adult social care, is very useful in these situations. I was not signposted to the website for*

*information on complaints, which I found strange as there is a format on the system for people to use."*

**NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit**  
**Tel: 0800 032 2424 – Customer Care Team**  
**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

The representatives found that their calls were handled well and felt they were provided with sufficient information to progress a complaint; for example, to write, email or contact the provider directly. One representative was given the telephone number of the clinical commissioning group who deal directly with complaints relating to their geographical area.

**Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**  
**Tel: 01772 695300 - Switchboard**  
**3 calls were made by 3 representatives**

**Summary**

One representative received an automated message whilst the other two representatives were transferred to the customer complaints team. Both representatives felt that they received consistent and helpful information.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"I could either write a letter or email Customer Care. I would receive a reply within 3 working days and my complaint would be forwarded to the appropriate network whose investigation lead would contact me. The call handler was very warm, friendly and courteous. Judging of first contact, I felt that my complaint would be dealt with in a way that I would have wished."*

*"The message was long. 'Sorry we cannot take your call', then proceeded to refer me to all sorts of services and gave them telephone numbers or email address; too quick for me to be able to write them down. The message ended by saying I could leave my details on the recorder and someone would phone me back."*

## **East Lancashire Area**

### **East Lancashire Hospitals Trust**

#### ***East Lancashire Hospitals Trust Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)***

East Lancashire Hospitals Trust PALS service can be contacted with regard to any complaint of an experience that has occurred within the hospitals provided by East Lancashire Hospitals Trust.

#### **PALS**

**Tel: 0800 587 2586**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

#### **Summary**

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives felt the information provided by the Trust was helpful. Both representatives felt that the calls were dealt with in a polite manner. One of the representatives was told that all the information about complaints was on the Trust's website whilst one representative, on asking about a website was given an email address that they could use ([complaints@elht.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@elht.nhs.uk)).

#### **Comments by representatives:**

*"They talked me through the entire complaints process and I was encouraged to give them a call back if I needed to talk through anything else."*

*"I felt confident that my complaint would be dealt with as there appeared to be a formal procedure that they had to follow."*

#### ***Burnley General Hospital and Pendle Community Hospital***

**Tel: 01282 425071 - Switchboard**

**5 calls were made by 3 representatives**

#### **Summary**

Three of the calls were transferred to ELHT PALS department. Of the calls transferred to the PALS department, one representative received an automated message which stated either 1) Speak to the ward staff/matron of the department to try and resolve the issue or 2) If not, leave a message and they would try and reply in 24 hours. One of the representatives was given the option of speaking directly to the ward or being put through to PALS.

Two representatives were directed to the ELHT website. One representative was also given information about advocacy. All the representatives found the calls that were answered were dealt with in a polite and friendly manner. The representative who was transferred to

the automated message was concerned that they could not speak to someone and would not want to speak to an answer machine.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"They told me that all the information is available on the website if I don't remember it on the phone today. I was told the website was ELHT.co.uk – having looked at the website, I did find it easily. I was told I could write to them as well."*

*"I was told that I could contact the advocacy service if I felt this was necessary. I was also told that I should always notify the department's complaints team before making an official complaint to the PALS team."*

*"Very easy to talk to on the telephone. The lady was very helpful and knowledgeable."*

*"I found being put through to an answering machine was very disconcerting. If I had been a relative/patient, I would not want to speak to an answer machine, especially if I am upset about issues and needed to speak to someone." (Response from representative who did not want to leave a message when transferred to the PALS answering machine).*

**Royal Blackburn Hospital**

**Tel: 01254 263555 - Switchboard**

**3 calls were made by 3 representatives**

**Summary**

Two of the calls were transferred to ELHT PALS team. One of the representatives was asked whether the concern had been raised with the department in question before the call was transferred. One of the representatives was given the telephone number of the PALS service and was therefore, not transferred.

Of the two calls that were transferred to ELHT PALS team, both representatives received similar information and they felt that their calls were dealt with in a polite, helpful and friendly manner.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"She explained the full complaints procedure step by step, and told me that all the details are online on the ELHT website under the 'Comments and Complaints' section. She was very efficient and very helpful. She did not push me into making a complaint or telling her what the complaint was regarding, which was good."*

*"I was reassured that they (ELHT) would deal with it efficiently and was fully informed by the lady on the phone about the whole complaints procedure."*

**Clitheroe Community Hospital**

**Tel: 01200 449000**

**3 calls were made by 3 representatives**

**Summary**

All three representatives received a slight variation of information. This may have been as one representative had stated that they had already contacted the department in question, whereas another representative had not decided whether to make a formal complaint. The third representative was asked which department it was concerning as the number dialled was just for the general office. Only one of the representatives was directed to the ELHT website.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"I was asked if I wished to make a formal complaint. When I said, I had not decided, I was informed that there were a couple of ways to proceed.*

*1. I could deal with the department in question*

*2. Go through PALS*

*The information given was clear and concise had I wanted to proceed. I was also given the number of PALS at Blackburn Hospital and the complaints department should I require it. She (staff member) also offered to send me a booklet with all the information in it. I felt comfortable talking to the person. She was polite and did not question me about the issue but just ensured I had all the information I required if I wished to proceed. I felt confident that should I wish to make a complaint; it would be dealt with in a professional manner. There was no hesitation about giving me the information that I needed."*

*"The caller advised me of how I could take my complaint further, and assured me that they would do their best to respond and deal with it effectively."*

*"I was given the number for the main switchboard of ELHT and was asked to telephone them to be transferred to PALS. I was told about the leaflets that the Trust have."*

**Accrington Victoria Hospital**

**Tel: 01254 359139**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

One representative was given the contact details and information to pursue the complaint. The call handler for the second representative placed the representative on hold so that they could find the information out. They were then asked to leave their number so that someone could call the representative back.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"I was signposted to PALS and was given telephone number to be able to contact them. I felt very comfortable talking to her. She was very polite and responded immediately with the phone number I required."*

*"The call handler was helpful and although they didn't know the information, they offered to take my number and call me back."*

**NHS East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01282 644700**

**1 call was made by 1 representative**

**Summary**

The representative felt that they were provided with sufficient information to pursue the complaint.

**Comment by representative:**

*"I was told that I should make a complaint direct to the service before complaining to the Clinical Commissioning Group (which I told them I had). I was directed to the relevant section on the Clinical Commissioning Group's website and I was told the Clinical Commissioning Group will handle the complaint and aim to respond as soon as possible."*

## **North Lancashire area**

### **University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust**

#### ***Queen Victoria Hospital, Morecambe***

**Tel: 01524 518965**

**Tel: 01539 795497 – PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) number**

**3 calls were made by 2 representatives**

#### **Summary**

The two representatives who contacted the hospital were unable to get through on the first attempt. However, they both received automated messages with details. This included being directed to the Trust website, leaving their contact details for someone to return their call or to send an email to the Trust and the email address to send it to. One representative's call was answered on the third attempt even though all the calls were made during office hours (9am-5pm). Once the calls were answered, the representatives felt that the information provided was sufficient to pursue a complaint.

#### **Comment by representative:**

*"The call handler was very helpful and considerate. They did not probe too much. They just wanted to give me the options to follow."*

#### ***Royal Lancaster Infirmary***

**Tel: 01524 65944**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

#### **Summary**

Both representatives were transferred to the PALS department and felt they were provided with sufficient information to pursue a complaint.

#### **Comments by representatives:**

*"I was advised to put my complaint in writing or via e-mail."*

*"Very comfortable speaking to them. No pressure was put on me to explain what my complaint was."*

### **NHS North Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01524 519369**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

#### **Summary**

One representative was advised to contact the hospital where the complaint occurred directly. When the representative expressed discomfort at this, the call handler advised them of the process to follow should they be dissatisfied with the response they received.

A second representative was advised to contact the area specific clinical commissioning group via letter or phone call. The representative was provided with a phone number but nothing further due to this clinical commissioning group not being in the geographical area of the original complaint.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"They asked the name of the hospital where the incident happened and asked whether I had complained to them at the time. I said it was [hospital] and I didn't feel comfortable complaining using their customer care team. The Clinical Commissioning Group encouraged me to complain to the customer care team directly and explained the complaint procedure to me."*

*"Once she knew it was [a different area] she gave the information and her job was done, not rude or abrupt but hurried to get me off the line"*

**Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

***Fleetwood Hospital***

**Tel: 01253 306053**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

Both representatives were transferred to the Patients' Relations Team. Both representatives felt that they were given sufficient information to pursue a complaint.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"She was very friendly and did not pressure me to make a complaint or enquire what sort of complaint I had. Very professional."*

*"Helpful and sufficient information provided."*

***Blackpool Victoria Hospital***

**Tel: 01253 300000 - Switchboard**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

Both representatives were transferred to the PALS team. Both representatives were happy with the telephone manner of the call handler and felt they could pursue a complaint based on the information given.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"He had a very nice phone manner and passed me through [to PALS] straight away."*

*"She was under pressure on a busy switchboard and sounded hurried, but not impatient, and handled my queries efficiently."*

**Clifton Hospital**

**Tel: 01253 956204**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

One representative's call was not answered and they were put straight through to a voicemail with options for different wards to be transferred to. A second representative was transferred to the complaints switchboard, where they were provided with plentiful information to pursue a complaint.

**Comment by representative:**

*"I was asked to email or write the complaint and the lady assured me it would be dealt with quickly. She also explained that they could either telephone, write or email me a response depending on which one I preferred. She was lovely and friendly and provided helpful information."*

**NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01253 956305**

**1 call was made by 1 representative**

**Summary**

The representative was put on hold whilst the call handler obtained information. The representative was referred to the PALS department at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust but were simply provided with the main switchboard telephone number. No additional details were provided.

**Comment by representative:**

*"I was put through to somebody 'who could help me'. This person did not identify themselves when answering the phone and I had to ask who I was speaking to. She said Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group so I said I was enquiring about making a complaint about [Name] hospital and could she tell me who to contact. She asked me to hold and then disappeared for a few minutes. When she came back, I was given the number for Blackpool Hospital (01253 300000) and that was it."*

## **Central Lancashire area**

### **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

#### ***Royal Preston Hospital***

**Tel: 01772 716565**

**Tel: 01772 522972 PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) number**

**3 calls were made by 2 representatives. Two of these calls was made directly to the PALS service**

#### **Summary**

One representative was immediately transferred to PALS from the switchboard. The representative was provided with an email address and felt they were provided with sufficient information to pursue a complaint.

A second representative contacted PALS directly on two occasions. On the first occasion, where the call was not answered, the representative was prompted to leave a name and number on the answering machine. On the second occasion, where the call was answered, the representative felt that sufficient information was provided on how to make both informal and formal complaints respectively.

#### **Comment by representative:**

*"Calm voice, reassuring and gave the email address slowly, giving me time to write it down properly. Positive and caring experience. Very professional."*

#### ***Chorley and South Ribble District General Hospital***

**Tel: 01257 261222**

**Tel: 01257 247280 PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) number**

**3 calls were made by 3 representatives. One of the calls was made directly to PALS**

#### **Summary**

One representative was given lots of information regarding the process of making a complaint, including where in the process the hospital would be in contact. The representative was also provided with an email address when requested.

A second representative was transferred to PALS and was given information on the different processes for formal and informal complaints as well as an email address to pursue the complaint via email or letter.

A third representative contacted PALS directly and was given information depending on the desired outcome of the complaint.

#### **Comments by representatives:**

*"I felt comfortable, she was friendly and I felt listened to."*

*"Very calm, friendly and helpful and easy to talk to. I got all the information I needed. Judging on first contact, I felt that any complaint would be dealt with in a way that I would have wished."*

*"He (the call handler) asked if it was ongoing and if I would like to tell him so he could direct me on the process more clearly. Very caring attitude and patient."*

**NHS Greater Preston Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01772 214601**

**1 call was made by 1 representative**

**Summary**

The representative was provided with several options to pursue the complaint including taking the complaint and forwarding it to [hospital trust] on their behalf.

**Comment by representative:**

*"The call handler was polite and friendly and provided me with a range of options including contacting PALS."*

**NHS Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01772 214601**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

**Summary**

One representative was asked if the complaint had been reported directly to the hospital; When the representative advised that they did not feel comfortable doing so, the call handler advised them of their complaints procedure. The representative was provided with an email address upon request and mentioned the option of advocacy if needed. The second representative was provided with a range of options to pursue the complaint further.

**Comments by representatives:**

*"I was asked if I had already shared my concern with the hospital. I said I hadn't, and didn't feel comfortable doing so they told me that this is okay and then advised me of their complaints procedure. The call handler was friendly and helpful enough."*

*"Very warm, friendly and courteous."*

## **West Lancashire area**

### **Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals Trust**

#### ***Ormskirk and District General Hospital***

**Tel: 01695 577111**

**3 calls were made by 3 representatives**

#### **Summary**

Two of the representatives were transferred directly to the complaints department where they both felt they received in-depth information with regards to their complaint.

A third representative made two separate calls on different days. On the first occasion the representative's call was not answered and they were prompted to leave their name and number. On the second attempt, the main operator transferred the representative to the complaints department where they were met with another voicemail service and again prompted to leave a name and number. The representative then hung up the call.

#### **Comments by representatives:**

*"She showed respect and had a caring attitude. She spoke softly and took her time to explain."*

*"They did not signpost me onto any other service, but I probably did not need this as they gave me all the relevant information I needed to submit a complaint to the hospital. I felt comfortable speaking to the person on the phone. They were very friendly."*

#### ***Southport and Formby District General Hospital***

**Tel: 01704 547471**

**2 calls were made by 2 representatives**

#### **Summary**

One representative was transferred to the complaints department and got through to the same call handler that had been contacted through the Ormskirk General and District Hospital in previous calls. The representative was given similar and sufficient information to pursue their complaint.

A second representative was also transferred to the complaints department of the hospital trust and felt that they were provided with sufficient information after being transferred.

#### **Comment by representative:**

*"Receptionist was friendly and knew who to direct me to."*

**NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tel: 01695 588000**

**1 call was made by 1 representative**

**Summary**

The representative received very little information. They were simply provided with the reception telephone number for Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit. When an email address was requested, the representative was told there was no generic email address and all emails are person specific.

## **Summary of all experiences**

This report describes the experiences of staff and volunteers trying to access the complaints processes of a range of health and care organisations in Lancashire. Of the 53 responses:

- All the representatives felt that, where calls were answered by a member of staff, they were handled in a polite manner.
- Most representatives felt that they were provided with sufficient and helpful information to pursue a complaint including being directed to the relevant section of the organisation's website and/or provided with an email address.
- Only a few representatives were asked if they required assistance in making a complaint and were informed of advocacy.
- Both the representatives who contacted Lancashire County Council were given inconsistent information. One representative was simply provided with an email address and was advised to fill in a complaints form. The second representative found that she did not feel confident in making a complaint with the information provided. Neither of the representatives were directed to the Lancashire County Council's website for information on complaints. In addition, they were not asked if they required advocacy.
- The representatives contacting NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group were not provided with a range of options to pursue their complaint. One representative was provided with the telephone number of Blackpool Hospital's switchboard and another representative was provided with the reception number of NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit to pursue the complaint.
- From the above point, a key issue recognised whilst undertaking this project was the large amount of confusion amongst volunteers and staff from Healthwatch Lancashire in relation to signposting to other NHS organisations. This was particularly evident where members of the public are signposted to NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit from the four clinical commissioning groups in Lancashire. Staff and volunteers have little understanding of this organisation and their role.

## **Response from Lancashire County Council**

The Customer Access service at Lancashire County Council has made extensive searches of call recordings. All calls are recorded for quality and training purposes and on an average day we handle 1400 calls per day on our Social Care line (0300 123 6720). Despite obtaining additional information from Healthwatch and reviewing all calls matching the information provided, the service has been unable to trace either call. The service is grateful for the feedback and it has prompted a review the information made available to our advisors regarding the process and procedure for complaints. The review has indicated that there is some duplication and contradiction in the information and guidance held on our information database and, as a result, the service is working to make the information clearer, more coherent and easier for the advisor to use when assisting customers. As part of this work, advisors will be fully briefed on the changes made and the importance of providing clear and appropriate information and guidance to customers.

The Customer Access service welcomes feedback and aims to utilize feedback to improve services: for any future mystery shopping exercises, it would be useful to note the time the call is made; any telephone option selected by the caller and the name of the advisor answering the call.

## **Response from East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust**

Results of the report regarding information provided by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust in relation to raising complaints were given to Chris Pearson, Director of Nursing, who says: "Healthwatch Lancashire volunteers and staff are thanked for the work undertaken to support the Trust in highlighting the positive findings from their mystery shopping project in relation to accessing information should service users wish to make a complaint."

In response to the comments relating to East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, we would like to point out the following:

- > Thank you for highlighting the issue regarding the PALS answering machine. Occasionally, if staff are engaged in other tasks, it is necessary to provide the facility to leave a message. The PALS team endeavour to respond to all messages as soon as possible.
- > In terms of the information provided, different staff may have different levels of experience and this may lead to slightly different approaches being used i.e. dealing with the problem themselves or redirecting the caller.

During training sessions staff are asked to respond to and resolve any enquiries / concerns raised wherever possible. If they do not feel confident to do so then they are advised to refer the matter to their manager or to contact the PALS team.

With regards to the variation in the telephone number provided - Switchboard / PALS team, both approaches are correct as Switchboard staff are aware of the necessity to transfer the call immediately to the PALS team.

## **Response from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would like to thank Healthwatch Lancashire for providing us with feedback relating to their recent mystery shopper project. The areas contacted relating to Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust where Clifton Hospital, Fleetwood Hospital and Victoria Hospital Blackpool.

It was encouraging to read that each of the callers were advised or directed to speak with a member of our Patient Relations Team and that the caller felt supported following [this](#) contact.

Part of The Patient Relations team role is to signpost and support people with any enquiries or concerns they may have as they come into contact with our Hospital and Healthcare services.

They pride themselves in helping with over 300 enquiries and contacts every month and it is great to read that from the examples given they are able to do this in a friendly, professional and patient way.

It is always great to hear when things have gone well and our staff or services have been praised. These positive comments will be shared with the teams involved and consideration will be given to the areas of good practice evident in the other organisations reviewed.

Thank you Healthwatch Lancashire for the information you have provided to us.

## **Response from NHS Greater Preston & NHS Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Groups**

The CCG's customer care team strives to provide a consistently helpful and friendly service, supporting people to navigate the complex complaints system. We are grateful for the very positive comments about our team who work hard to deliver an excellent service.