

## **“What do you think?”**

### **Comments, Suggestions and Complaints**

We aim to provide the highest standards of care to all our patients but we recognise that there may be occasions when you have concerns you wish to bring to our attention.

This leaflet contains information on the steps you need to take if you wish to make a comment, suggestion or complaint.

There are also some useful addresses and telephone numbers of people and organisations you may wish to contact.

#### **How do I make a Comment, Suggestion or Complaint?**

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust has in place a procedure that assists patients and staff in dealing with suggestions and complaints. We wish to address your concerns positively with a view to promoting improvement in the service we provide.

You can make your comment, suggestion or complaint:

##### **Verbally:**

To members of the Ward or Department staff. If you wish, you can ask to speak to a manager. This is often the best way of making a complaint, as in many cases, the matter can be quickly resolved to your satisfaction.

##### **PALS:**

The hospital PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) Manager can be contacted on 0151 702 4353

##### **By Telephone:**

By phoning the hospital and asking to speak to the Ward/Department Manager or, alternatively, you can telephone the Patient Quality Manager on 0151 702 4160. You may find it useful to make a note of your main points of concern before you telephone.

If you wish to make a complaint via the telephone or during a meeting, a list of the issues or concerns you have raised will be sent to you in writing. If you are satisfied that this is an accurate recording, you will be asked to sign a confirmation form to acknowledge this. The investigation into your concerns will then commence.

##### **In Writing:**

Write to the Chief Executive, Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust Crown Street, Liverpool, L8 7SS. If you wish to make a complaint it will help if you can tell us:

- Your full name and address,
- Your patient hospital number (if known),
- The dates of your stay in hospital or outpatient appointment(s),
- The Ward or Department concerned and the names of relevant personnel,
- A list of your main concerns.

This information will help us to investigate your complaint promptly.

### **Do Complaints Need to be Made Within a Certain Time Limit?**

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust will investigate complaints that are:

- Made within 6 months of an event
- Made within 6 months of you becoming aware that you have cause for complaint

In cases where these limits are exceeded, discretion will be exercised. If there are valid reasons for the lateness in registering a complaint the time limits may be waived.

**NB:** It should be noted that in cases where legal action is intended or has commenced, the event cannot be investigated under the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

### **The Trust Aims to:**

- Acknowledge written and verbal complaints within 2 working days from date of receipt of complaint.
- Provide a written response from the Chief Executive within 20 working days from receipt of complaint or a letter advising the reason for any unavoidable delay.  
**NB:** Working days exclude weekends and statutory holidays, e.g. Christmas, Bank Holidays.
- Facilitate patients' complaints without fear that their current or future care would be compromised.
- Respect patient confidentiality.
- Investigate thoroughly all complaints received by us with a view to satisfying the complainant and being fair to staff.

The above describes Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure known as LOCAL RESOLUTION.

## **What do I do if I Need Help Dealing with a Complaint?**

If you would like help when making your complaint, The Carers Federation Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (**ICAS**) would be happy to assist. ICAS is an independent organisation, which will provide information, advice and support to the public on issues relating to the Health Service. ICAS can be contacted by phoning the North West branch of The Carers Federation on 0845 1203735.

It is recognised that patients do, at times, wish to make a complaint but may feel too unwell or unable to deal with the matter themselves. In such circumstances, we would be willing to accept a complaint from a close relative, e.g. husband, wife, son, daughter, on the condition that a written consent, signed by the patient, is provided stating that the patient has nominated a named person to act on their behalf in respect of the complaint. In cases where a patient is incapable of providing consent, a close relative or next of kin may be accepted as the complainant.

## **What Happens if I am Dissatisfied with the Response to my Complaint?**

You may ask the Healthcare Commission to review your case. This should be done within 2 months of receipt of the Trust's letter of response. The Healthcare Commission is an independent body established to promote improvements in healthcare throughout the assessment of the performance of those who provide services. You can contact the Healthcare Commission on 020 7448 9200 or write to them at:

**Healthcare Commission**  
Complaints Team  
Peter House  
Oxford Street  
Manchester  
M1 5AN

or visit their web site at [www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk)

## **What if I Remain Dissatisfied Following Completion of the Complaint Procedure?**

If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to refer your complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is not obliged to investigate every complaint, with the decision on any action being entirely at his/her discretion. It should be noted that the Ombudsman would not usually take a case that has not been dealt with through the NHS Complaints Procedure, as detailed in this leaflet, or a case that is being handled by solicitors or the courts.

### **The Health Service Ombudsman**

11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0845 015 4033

For any further advice or information please contact the Patient Quality Manager on 0151 702 4160 or the Patient Quality Facilitator on 0151 702 4416. If the Manager is not available, please leave a message on the answerphone and your call will be dealt with as soon as possible.

**Please note:** The Trust respectfully requests that complainants approach staff with courtesy as aggressive behaviour towards staff is considered unacceptable.

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust  
Crown Street  
Liverpool  
L8 7SS

Tel: 0151 708 9988  
Fax: 0151 708 6303

Website: [www.lwh.org.uk](http://www.lwh.org.uk)

Aintree Centre for Women's Health  
Aintree House  
Longmoor Lane  
Liverpool  
L9 7AL

Tel: 0151 525 3622

This information is available in different formats on request.

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