



# Improving Salisbury District Hospital's complaints handling process

In autumn 2022 we carried out a piece of work to [hear your views on making a complaint at Salisbury District Hospital](#), which made several recommendations to make information about the complaints process easier to understand.

Following on from this report, the hospital has introduced a new Complaints Handling Policy and created a new Guide to Complaints, Concerns, Comments and Compliments.



**You said**  
Make it easier for people to make a complaint and give them confidence in the complaints process.

**What's changed?**  
Our volunteers, as well as the hospital's Patient Experience Steering Group, have been involved in the development of the new leaflet to ensure that it's patient friendly. Their suggestions included:

- A clear, Plain English guide to the process with a reassuring, friendly tone
- An emphasis on who the PALS team are and what they do
- Map and photos of where the team is based

There will be digital and printed versions of the guide available, an accessible version compatible with screen readers, and an Easy Read version.

### PALS – who we are and how we can help you

As the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), we act as the "customer service" for our hospital. We can advise and support you, your family, visitors and carers with:

- Listening to your suggestions, queries and concerns.
- Helping to sort out problems on your behalf.
- Giving information about NHS services.
- Facilitating access needs including arranging interpreters or other accessible information (see page 6).

**Meet our PALS team**  
We can also give you information about the NHS complaints procedure (see page 9 of this booklet), including details of Advocacy services if you want to make a complaint. A member of our team can take the details of your complaint and will work with the relevant department(s) to investigate your concerns.

Additionally, we are able to help you get involved with the hospital through our various engagement initiatives.

### How to find us

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) office is located in the Central part of the hospital. We are most easily accessible via Entrance B on Odstock Road, then 'The Green' Entrance (Entrance C on the map).

Through 'The Green' Entrance (see below) the office is the second door on the left.

If you are accessing PALS from the Main Entrance in the North building (Entrance E on the Map), you will need to go up to level 4 and follow the signs for the link bridge.

There is a short stay designated PALS parking space (30 minutes max) for visitors to the PALS office. This is located just outside the Green Entrance. Alternatively, there is parking in Car Parks 7 and 8.

### Making a complaint

Although we hope that all patients will have a positive experience of using our services, we accept that sometimes things can go wrong. When this happens, we would like to know, so that we can try to put things right and stop the same thing happening again, to you, or to someone else.

We have an open and honest approach to dealing with complaints and ensure that they are investigated thoroughly and fairly to establish the facts. We work hard to learn from what people have told us and use this to help us improve the services that we deliver.

### Talking it through

If you have any concerns, it is always best to let someone know whilst you are in hospital. This can be the ward sister, charge nurse or your consultant. Please be assured that raising your concerns will not affect your care or treatment in any way. If you, your relatives or your partner are unhappy with any aspect of your care, or the service you receive, it is best to try and sort it out straight away.

If you are an inpatient, or are visiting an inpatient, the best person to talk to is the Senior Sister or Nurse in Charge of the ward. If you are an outpatient, please ask the staff at any reception area to put you in touch with the member of staff you need to talk to.



### What's next?

Kate Barber, Volunteering and Partnerships Lead at Healthwatch Wiltshire, explains:

"We're delighted that public feedback has helped shape improvements to the complaints process at Salisbury District Hospital. It's great to see how committed staff are to ensuring the patient voice is heard.

"Our readers' panel of volunteers have been instrumental in providing constructive

feedback on the new leaflet. We're pleased that the volunteers' comments have been taken on board and it's lovely they've been recognised for their work.

"Being part of the Patient Experience Steering Group means we can continue to see how the hospital engages with patients and the different ways it gathers their experiences."



"Healthwatch Wiltshire continue to work in collaboration with the Patient Experience team here at Salisbury Hospital. They are a regular and valued presence within our monthly Patient Experience Steering Group (PESG) and continue to support our service improvement plans related to our Complaints process.

"A key milestone for this improvement project was the redevelopment of the Trust's complaints leaflet. This underwent a vigorous review with our colleagues at Healthwatch Wiltshire and further reviews by the hospital's patient readership groups. This was formally launched in October 2023 and is the first publication to carry our new 'patient reviewed' stamp to indicate these various collaborations.

"Since May 2023, the complaints process survey originally developed with Healthwatch Wiltshire has become an integral part of the follow-up for all closed complaints and concerns. Surveys are digitally accessible via a QR code and paper copies are also sent via post where this is preferred. Regular analysis of these results continues to act as a benchmark for these improvements.

"I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to our colleagues at Healthwatch Wiltshire who continue to work with us to improve our services for the benefit of our patients."

**Victoria Aldridge, Head of Patient Experience at Salisbury District Hospital**



## Find out more

**Your experiences of making a complaint at Salisbury District Hospital highlights the findings from a survey that gathered the views of people on the complaints handling process at Salisbury District Hospital.**

**Our report reveals that people found it difficult to find information on how to make a complaint and didn't fully understand the role of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).**

**Visit our website to read the report.**