



Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you do not wish to complain, but just want help and advice or have concerns, you can contact PALS to discuss any queries about the NHS. PALS provide support to patients, carers and relatives, representing their views and resolving local difficulties on-the-spot by working in partnership with NHS staff. The service aims to:

- ◆ Advise and support patients, their families and carers,
- ◆ Provide information on NHS services,
- ◆ Listen to your concerns, suggestions and queries,
- ◆ Help sort out problems quickly on your behalf.

You can contact PALS on freephone: 0800 032 0202

Who to contact

Mrs Alice Southern
Complaints Co-Ordinator
Collingwood Health Group
Hawkeys Lane
North Shields
NE29 0SF

Independent Complaints
Advocacy Service (ICAS)
Unit 312 Aidan House
Sunderland Road
Gateshead
NE8 3HU

Tel: 0191 257 1779

Tel: 0808 802 3000

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

Further information about the Ombudsman can be found on: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

**Listening to
and acting on
what people
say about our
practice**

**COLLINGWOOD
HEALTH GROUP**

How we can help

If you have a comment, compliment, complaint or concern about the services you have received from any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice based complaints procedure as part of the NHS procedure for dealing with complaints. We take comments, complaints and concerns very seriously and will endeavour to deal with any issues efficiently and effectively.

How to complain

We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of an NHS system for dealing with complaints.

Please ask to see the Practice Manager, in order to discuss your concerns. She will explain the complaints procedure to you and will make sure that your concerns are dealt with confidentially, promptly and thoroughly. It will be of great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint. Alternatively, you can write to the Practice Manager with details of your complaint.

- your complaint will be formally acknowledged within 2 working days;
- your complaint will be thoroughly investigated within 10 working days; we shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting to discuss it.

This is known as Local Resolution.

The aim of the complaints process

- find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible for you to discuss the problems with those concerned, if you wish to do this;
- make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- try to make sure that the problem does not occur again.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

We keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have their permission to do so.

Time limits

There are time limits on making a complaint. Normally a complaint should be made within six months of the event or within six months of the date of discovering the problem.

You can ask for a complaint to be considered after this time limit if you explain why you did not complain earlier.

What if you remain unhappy following local resolution?

If following the local resolution process you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Health Services Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can carry out independent investigations into complaints about poor treatment or service provided through the NHS in England. The Ombudsman's services are free.

If you need help to make your complaint

If you need any help the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) will be glad to advise and support you. ICAS is an independent body which represents the views of users of the health service. They are able to give advice, information and support to complainants throughout these procedures.