

In many cases we will respond to a complaint in writing, but sometimes we may feel that a meeting with staff would be beneficial. If you would prefer to meet with staff, please let us know and we will be happy to consider this.

If the investigation identifies any shortfalls or failures, we will acknowledge these and apologise in our response. Importantly, we will also explain what action we are taking to prevent this happening again.

We want you to be satisfied with the outcome of your complaint. If we don't achieve this with our first response to you, we would like you to tell us so that we can do more to help resolve your concerns. This might require another letter or, in many cases, it is possible for us to arrange a meeting with senior staff to discuss your complaint further.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (Stage Two)

If you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with your complaint, or if we feel we can't resolve your complaint, you have the right to approach the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and ask for a review of your case. The Ombudsman is independent of the NHS.

Contact the Ombudsman using their website:

www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint

Phone: ☎ 0345 015 4033

Other help and advice

The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) is an independent service which can provide free and confidential advice and support in making your complaint. You can contact the local ICAS provider:

In writing:

seAp Hastings
PO Box 375
Hastings
East Sussex TN34 9HU

Phone: ☎ 0330 440 9000

Fax: ☎ 01424 204687

Website: www.seap.org.uk

Email: info@seap.org.uk



MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.

Issue date: May 2019

Review date: May 2022

Database reference: RWF-OPLF-PC7

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Making a complaint

Ready to listen, ready to learn

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from people who use our services. We appreciate that, despite our best efforts, sometimes we don't always get everything right and when we don't, it's important for us to be aware of this and see what lessons can be learned. If we can put things right, we will, but if we can't change what's happened, we will do everything possible to make sure that it doesn't happen again.

If you find that you have cause to complain, this leaflet will explain what to do and what to expect.

Who can complain?

A patient can make a complaint themselves or they can ask a friend, relative or advocate to support them or act on their behalf.

Will my care be affected if I make a complaint?

No, absolutely not. Patients have the right to raise a complaint about the service they have received. We want to know if you are unhappy so that we can try to put things right.

Details of your complaint are held separately to your healthcare records and only those staff who need to know will be aware that you have made a complaint.

Who should I complain to?

Tell a member of staff on the ward or in the clinic as soon as possible.

If you are on a ward, ask to speak to the ward manager. If you are in a clinic, ask for help at reception. In most cases, staff will be able to deal with your concerns then and there. If this isn't possible or your concerns aren't resolved after talking to staff, please contact our:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will work with you to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. There are PALS offices at Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital where you can speak to a member of staff in person. Staff at main reception will be happy to direct you. The PALS offices are normally open:

9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Alternatively, you can contact them by:

Phone: ☎ 01622 224960 or
☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

Some cases can't be resolved with the help of PALS. If this happens, the PALS team will explain why and provide guidance to the complaints process. Alternatively, you may want to contact the **Complaints Team** directly.

There are two stages to the complaints process. The regulations require the Trust to investigate complaints in the first instance. This is called **local resolution**.

Local resolution (Stage One)

It's important that you make your complaint as soon as possible after the event. We will usually only be able to investigate complaints made within 12 months of the event occurring or within 12 months of you realising you have cause to complain.

Contact the Complaints Office

In writing:

Complaints Office,
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust,
Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane,
Maidstone ME16 9QQ

Phone: ☎ 01622 226406

Email: mtw-tr.complaints@nhs.net

To help us investigate your complaint as thoroughly as possible and without delay, please provide:

- the patient's full name, date of birth and hospital number (if known)
- your name, address and a daytime telephone number
- full details of your concerns including dates, times, locations and names of staff involved (where possible)
- details of any specific questions you would like the Trust to answer
- what outcome you are seeking from your complaint

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, we will need to obtain their consent to share their confidential medical information with you. We can provide a form for this purpose on receipt of your complaint.

What happens next?

A member of the team will try to contact you by telephone to discuss your complaint. As part of this conversation, they will usually:

- introduce themselves
- gather any further information from you that they may need to assist them with the investigation
- discuss how long they anticipate it will take to complete the investigation
- establish what you are seeking as an outcome of your complaint
- agree with you how you would like us to feedback our findings

We will then acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within 3 working days.

The details of your concerns will be passed to the senior management team(s) responsible for the service(s) involved in your complaint and they will support the investigation.

We aim to respond to most complaints within 25 working days. However, if a complaint is particularly serious, complex or involves other organisations, we will require more time to respond. Where possible, we will identify this at the outset.