

A Guide to Formal Complaints

What if a service user, carer or relative wants to make a complaint, or if I have received a complaint?

A formal complaint is an issue that cannot be resolved locally within 3 working days or is of such a serious nature that requires investigation.

Patient Experience and Involvement Team (PEI) coordinate record and report on complaints. If you receive a:

- *Verbal complaint*- request the complainant to call PEI Team on free phone 0800 587 7720 or 0121 612 8030 for advice.
- *Written complaint* - forward the email to pei@bcpft.nhs.uk or send the letter in internal post to PEI Team, Delta House, or fax (after notification) ext 8090

What do PEI Team do next?

PEI Team coordinates the complaint in accordance with the complaints policy:

- Register complaint
- Contact the Clinical Directors, Head of Nursing and the Group Director to confirm who will investigate the complaint copying in Group Governance Teams.
- Acknowledge complaint within 3 working days

What do I do if I'm the lead investigator?

- Contact complainant to discuss complaint and offer meeting to discuss findings once investigation completed
- Gathering information. Speak to staff involved.
- Collate statements. review records.
- Attend a meeting if one has been requested (by complainant) **prior to completion of investigation** (must be within 15 days of receipt)
- Complete the complaint Plan and response letter provided by PEI Team.

What should happen at the meeting?

- Listen to the complainant
- Discuss how the complaint will /has been managed i.e. process
- Present investigation findings and discuss with complainant
- Answer /explain what happens next (implementation action plan)
- **Give complainant copy of response letter**

Timeline for Response:

4 weeks from receipt of complaint or following complaint meeting if one is held.

If complaint is high level the deadline may be extended.

How is the complaint completed?

- The lead investigator completes the investigation within the timescale as agreed by the complainant, or by no later than six months (unless the complainant has agreed to this)
- The lead investigator drafts the response letter (*with support from PEI team if required*) including details of the investigations and sends to Head of Nursing for approval.
- Head of Nursing approves complaint and forwards to PEI Officer
- PEI Team finalises the response letter for the Chief Executive to sign the complaint (copy uploaded to Datix and Group Governance Teams informed)
- The lead investigator contacts complainant to ascertain how findings are presented i.e. face to face meeting or by formal letter. If face to face meeting a copy of the formal response must be given to complainant.



Reporting on complaints:

- Monthly Divisional Reports with actions and lessons learnt for all divisions.
- Weekly call report to action complaints and monitor compliance to policy/procedure and to cross reference with the reported Duty of Candour incidents. Complaints that also meet DoC can also be reported to the Governance Team to ensure DOC has been met.
- Information included in the Quarterly Lessons Learnt Bulletin.
- Complaints data is in the Clinical Dashboard, which is shared with the Board of Directors and Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Patient Experience and Involvement Annual Report

Did you know...?

- All complaints to PALS that are not resolved within 3 working days are registered as a formal complaint
- It is a legal requirement to respond to a complaint in 3 working days
- If the complainant is not happy with the Trust's response, they can take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- People wishing to make a complaint must do so within 12 months of an incident happening or of becoming aware of the matter complained about
- If the complaint involves two or more organisations, the person complaining should receive a single, coordinated response
- Complaints about our services can be made to NHS England or local Clinical commissioning Group (CCG) and must still be investigated

A Guide to a Reported Concern

What if a service user, carer or relative wants to raise a concern?

Patient Experience and Involvement Team (PEI) coordinate record and report on concerns. If you receive a:

A concern is an informal issue that can be resolved locally within 3 working days of the Trust being notified.

- *Verbal concern* – Inform PEI team how this is going to be managed locally Free phone 0800 587 7720 or 0121 612 8030 for advice.
- *Written concern* - forward the email to pei@bcpft.nhs.uk or send the letter in internal post to PEI Team, Delta House, or fax (after notification) ext 8090. Identifying how this is going to be managed locally

PEI Team coordinates the concerns in accordance with the complaints policy:

- Register concern
- Contact the Head of Nursing and the Group Director to inform them of the concerns raised and if known how it is going to be managed locally. If not known ascertain who will speak to complainant.
- If concern is not resolved within 3 working days the PEI team will register this has a formal complaint (see formal complaint guide)

What do I do if I'm requested to investigate?

- Contact complainant to discuss complaint and ascertain if issues reported can be resolved immediately
- Confirm complainant is happy for it to be resolved locally
- Gathering information. Speak to staff if involved.
- Report finding back to complainant
- If complaint is happy with outcome document in notes and inform the PEI team it has been resolved so the outcome can be recorded on Datix.