PROVIDING CARE AND TREATMENT

No-one enjoys being ill and in hospital. We therefore aim to provide a local acute health service second to none, but we really do need you to tell us when we get it right, and when we can do better. If you have a complaint about the care or services you received, we will investigate your complaint thoroughly. Please be assured that your right to care, treatment or services will not be compromised by your complaint. Where mistakes have occurred we will give you an explanation, an apology and say what action we have taken to prevent others experiencing the same problems.

This leaflet tells you how to make a complaint, but we also welcome your comments and suggestions and we are always pleased to hear when things have gone well. Please take time to contact us and let us know what you think. Please write to:

Complaints Department
Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust
Darent Valley Hospital
Darenth Wood Road
Dartford
Kent DA2 8DA

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED

We always do our best, sometimes under very difficult circumstances, but if you are unhappy with your visit to the hospital or the service you have received please let us know. We may be able to set your mind at rest and change things to improve them for you and other patients.

A complainant can be a person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of an NHS organisation, providing NHS services or treatments. A complaint can also be made on behalf of a patient or person once their written consent has been obtained. The first port of call is to tell the person in charge of the ward or department of your worry or problem. If they can help, they will be happy to do so. If you just want to raise a concern or complaint, informally, please contact:

Patient Advice & Liaison Officer
Tel: 01322 428382
24 hour answer phone service available
Email: dgn-tr.pals@nhs.net

If you wish to make a formal complaint, then please contact:

Complaints Manager
Tel: 01322 428436
Office open from 9am to 4.45pm
Email: dgn-tr.complaints-dvh@nhs.net

Under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009, my team will endeavour to provide you with the Chief Executive’s formal response as soon as reasonably practicable.

Our aim is to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and as part of that process, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss your concerns.

If you feel that we have not answered your complaint in our written response, please write back or telephone us and we will look at it again.

NHS HEALTH COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY SERVICE

If you require help in making your written complaint then a free, confidential, independent advocacy service is available to support anyone in pursuing a complaint about the NHS. Your local contact is:

Tel: 0300 343 5714 (local rate from a landline)
Fax: 01424 204687
Website: www.seap.org.uk
Email: kent@seap.org.uk
Or connect on Facebook

SEAP Advocates provide complainants with the information, advice and support needed to help them through the complaints procedure. They can explain the complaints procedure and what to expect from it, and can advise on further options once a response has been received.

The level of support will depend on the needs of the client and can include assistance with writing a letter of complaint and attendance at any meetings arranged as part of the complaints procedure.

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

If you are not satisfied with the results of the Local Resolution process, you can ask the Complaints Department for an Independent Assessment of your complaint. If you wish to have an Independent Assessment following your Local Resolution Meeting, you should state clearly which parts of your complaint you are dissatisfied with and the reasons why. Requests for Independent Assessment should be made within six months from receipt of the Trust’s Final Response letter or notes from your Local Resolution Meeting.
Please note that the Trust will consider all applications for an Independent Assessment on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, it is possible that there may be occasions when the Trust will decline a request.

THE PARLIAMENTARY AND HEALTH SERVICE OMBUDSMAN

If all else fails and you remain dissatisfied with your treatment or the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, you can seek the help of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office will review your complaint to decide if it can help. Its investigators will contact you and us and may decide to interview individuals connected to the case. Their decision is final. They can be contacted at:

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

Tel: 0345 015 4033
Fax: 0300 061 4000

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman can only offer their help when all other sources of help have been tried and have failed.

TIME LIMITS TO THE MAKING OF A COMPLAINT

Because it becomes increasingly difficult to investigate a complaint with the passage of time it is important to use your right to complain as soon as possible after you become aware of the problem. Complaints received more than six months after you become aware of a problem, or more than twelve months after an incident, will be considered by the Trust on an individual basis, depending on the circumstances.

HELP US TO HELP YOU

The Trust Board is advised of all compliments, comments and complaints we receive and we hope that with your help we can improve our services so that they match your expectations.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

How to register your views on the services we provide

Darent Valley Hospital
Darenth Wood Road
Dartford
Kent DA2 8DA

Tel: 01322 428100
www.dvh.nhs.uk