

## What we learn

We keep a record of all contacts with complainants to:

- make sure we are dealing with complaints effectively and efficiently
- identify any quality or patient safety issues through monitoring themes and trends
- ensure appropriate learning has been identified and implemented

## You can contact Complaints by the following:

You can write to the Chair or Chief Executive at the address on the cover of this leaflet, or email [somicb.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:somicb.complaints@nhs.net) or via the link on our website detailed at the bottom of this page. Complaints will then make contact with you.

## Independent Complaint Advocacy Service (ICAS)

ICAS provides another option for people wishing to complain or who have already complained about services provided by the NHS. It is a free, impartial and independent service. If you require more information about their service, or to arrange support, you can contact ICAS by writing to:

**SWAN ADVOCACY**, Hi-point, Thomas Street, Taunton, TA2 7HB  
Telephone: 0333 344 7928 Email: [reception@swanadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:reception@swanadvocacy.org.uk)

## Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Following receipt of our formal response, if you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review your complaint. The Ombudsman will only investigate a complaint if all attempts to resolve the concerns local have been exhausted.

## The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP  
Telephone: 0345 015 4033 (complaints helpline)  
Email: [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)



**Somerset**

# Complaints

Information for patients, relatives or carers in Somerset



NHS Somerset, Wynford House, Lufton Way, Yeovil  
BA22 8HR

**Complaints, Concerns, Comments and Compliments**  
**We're here to help**

## Introduction

NHS Somerset is responsible for planning and commissioning healthcare services for Somerset. We are committed to improving the quality and safety of care for patients, their relatives and carers, therefore we welcome your compliments, comments, concerns and complaints because they help us to identify areas that are working well, but also highlight areas we need to change.

## When you want to pay a compliment

Staff appreciate it when patients, relatives or carers go out of their way to thank them for their efforts. We keep a record of all compliments that are received and they will be passed onto the relevant team, or individual. You can also compliment the team or individual directly. Compliments can be sent to the CCG PALS team, as below.

## If you have a comment or concern

We would also like to hear from you if you have any suggestions about how we can improve our services, but do not wish to make a formal complaint. Comments or concerns can be shared with the NHS Somerset PALS team, as below.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Concerns are often best dealt with when they arise, so we would encourage you to first explain your problem to a member of staff or the local PALS team within the hospital. Alternatively, you can contact the CCG PALS team on 0800 0851 067 or email

[somccg.pals@nhs.net](mailto:somccg.pals@nhs.net)

## Consent

In order to take forward any matter the consent of the individual involved (or their next of kin/representative) is usually required. Further details and the relevant forms are available through the PALS or Complaints team.

## Making a complaint

Complaints are very valuable to us and they help us to identify areas where we need to make changes and improvements. We take them very seriously and they are treated in confidence. Complaints are not kept in healthcare records and will not affect ongoing or future treatment in any way.

It is helpful if you make complaint as soon as possible after the event. This will enable us to investigate the issues effectively. The period of time where we can investigate is usually within one year of the incident or one year of you or a family member noticing something is not quite right.

## Please remember .....

It is important to be clear about what aspect of care is causing concern. Be specific and think about what you want to achieve. It will help us if you provide your full contact details including a daytime telephone number.

## What happens when you make a complaint?

Written complaints will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt. Verbal complaints are also accepted. We will try to contact you to discuss your complaint and explain the complaints process. We will try to provide you with a formal response within 25 working days, but some issues may take longer because they are complex. If that is the case, we will agree timescales with you. If the issues also involve other NHS organisations or the Local Authority, we will work with them to provide you with one response.

Our formal response will set out the points you have raised, the details of what we have found out and where appropriate, what will be done to put things right. If there are some points that we do not agree with, or cannot resolve, you will be given the reason for this. We will also discuss the options you have for resolving any outstanding matters.