

To: Trust Board

Date of Meeting: 2nd October 2014

Agenda Item: 7

Title
Annual Complaints & PALS report 2013-14
Responsible Executive Director
Cathy Stone, Director of Nursing & Patient Safety
Prepared by
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Status
Disclosable
Summary of Proposal
To note the findings of the report
Implications for Quality of Care
To review statistics and summary of feedback and improvements from complaints & PALS enquiries about service and patient care
Link to Strategic Objectives/Board Assurance Framework
Patient Safety agenda – improving the patient experience/learning lessons
Financial Implications
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial penalties may be incurred in the event of a reported Never Event. 2. Subsequent patient litigation claims may occur. 3. Loss of Commissioner confidence may result in loss of Trust business.
Human Resource Implications
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional performance management issues for individuals. 2. Learning and development requirements. 3. Organisational, behavioural and cultural issues.
Recommendation
The Board is asked to: note the findings of the report
Communication and Consultation
Patient Experience & Feedback Committee, divisions and Customer Relations team
Appendices
None

Customer Feedback

PALS & Complaints Learning the Lessons and Improving

Annual Report 2013-14



CONTENTS

	Page no.
Foreword	3
The role of the Customer Relations Department	3
Engaging with the public: what our users said and how we responded	4
Positive Outcomes/Lessons Learnt	5
Plaudits	6
Patient Experience & Feedback Committee	6
Statistics	7-8
Conclusion	9

Foreword

This report summarises the way we worked last year to listen to those who use our services and sought ways to improve services for patients. The report should be read in conjunction with and supports the analytical quarterly report which is in the public domain.

The role of the Customer Relations department



We provide a service for everyone who contacts us from providing advice on how and where to complain, to investigating matters of concern and resolving things that have gone wrong. Not every complaint needs to be resolved by investigation if the concerns are about current treatment where action can be taken quickly to resolve problems.

The Patient advice and Liaison service (PALS) is situated in the main entrances of Worthing Hospital and St Richard's Hospital to carry out:

- Signposting i.e. providing information, advice or reassurance
- Management of smaller issues that can be resolved quickly
- Assisting patients/relatives who need time to discuss concerns
- A triage service for telephone and face to face enquiries

Formal Complaints

- The complaints team work on behalf of the Chief Executive based at Worthing Hospital and St Richard's Hospital to investigate more complex and serious concerns that require a formal investigation and written response.

Engaging with the public: what our users said and how we responded



In 2013/14 62% of formal complaints were upheld in part or fully. During the year we examined in detail the PALS enquiries and formal complaints received to listen and learn when things went wrong. We responded in a variety of ways including:

- ✚ providing advice and information to people on healthcare and general matters.
- ✚ a triage service to respond to all telephone calls and visitors and provide advice and support.
- ✚ we provided written explanations about treatment that patients received as part of our formal complaints procedure.
- ✚ we met with patients and relatives about their concerns together with senior management (and in some cases the Chief Executive) to ensure issues were resolved and actions required followed through.

The Customer Relations team had **8,781** contacts during the year from patients, relatives and other users of our services. In **94%** of cases, we helped put things right via our PALS service.

58% of enquiries (5,110) were on the spot general advice and information requests. A further 3,149 were individual issues or concerns dealt with by the PALS team within one working day, most involving the relevant staff/divisions to facilitate answers and/or a meeting where appropriate.

522 cases (6% of all enquiries) required a formal investigation under the NHS Complaints Procedure due to their complexity or the seriousness of the issues raised.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES/LESSONS LEARNT

The trust implemented a number of improvements as a result of PALS enquiries and formal complaints throughout the year. The following examples are a selection of these:

You said there was.....

We acted by....

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Inadequate provision for ophthalmic appointments resulting in frequent cancellations and delays. | Undertaking an external review of the service and implementing a dedicated telephone triage to respond to appointment queries and improve customer service. |
| ✓ A delay in answering call bells on one of the elderly wards | Implementing a new call bell system which displays chronologically which patients have called for assistance to improve response times. |
| ✓ Confusion over medication needed on discharge from hospital. | Improving the policy for labelling take home medicines. |
| ✓ Poor provision of advice and specialist expertise for patients undergoing pre-assessment for cardioversion treatment. | Moving this unit closer to the Angiography Suite. |
| ✓ Confusion regarding the process and criteria for entry and reinstatement of patients on waiting lists for surgery. | Sending a letter to patients when they are removed from the waiting list to ensure there is clear guidance about how to reinstate their entry at a later date. |
| ✓ Poor communication and advice when accessing the oncology services in an emergency. | Providing a bleep number to the oncology staff to provide better access to neutropenic patients who require access to advice and admission out of hours when at high risk of infection. |
| ✓ A delay between clinic appointments. | Arranging additional clinics in the evenings and at weekends. |
| ✓ No communication about the waiting time when a patient came in for day surgery. | Ensuring details of the approximate waiting time is included in the admission letter |

PLAUDITS

We measured the number of plaudits received within the organisation during the year to identify what was working well through compliment trends so that good practice could be shared. Plaudits were received in a variety of ways by letter, cards, e-mails, telephone calls, donations, cakes, chocolates, biscuits and sweets. We know from our plaudits that the most important thing for patients and relatives is that they are made to feel special and relaxed and treated in an efficient and timely way.

The trust's business plan is based on the vision and values of the organisation, 'We Care', to embed a culture of customer focus throughout the Trust to ensure that we treat patients with kindness, dignity and respect. In addition to our plaudits, this will be evidenced through improvements in our patient survey, and in real-time feedback from patients and carers.

4,574 patients and relatives made a special effort to thank the staff who looked after them or their loved ones and compliment their standards of care. The trust shares this information on a compliments board with staff on its intranet site and on notice boards around the hospital sites for the public to read.

Patient Experience & Feedback Committee

During the year, the committee met on behalf of the Trust Board to examine and discuss the feedback received as a result of PALS enquiries and formal complaints. The Non-Executive Directors of the committee audited a selection of our formal complaints received in 2013-14 to ensure that the process of investigation and response to complaints was effective.

Statistics

The following tables give a statistical breakdown of information regarding PALS and complaints activity during the last year. It is broken down by Q1 (April to June 2013) followed by the period July 2013 to the end of March 2014, the first nine-month period after Foundation Trust status was awarded.

Figure 1: New and closed cases

	April to June 2013	July 2013 to March 2014	2013-14	2012-13
PALS enquiries received	796	2,353	3,149	2,807
New formal complaints	141	381	522	565
No upheld (partially or in full)	83	243	326 (62%)*	391(69%)
Plaudits	1,234	3,340	4,574	5,010
Total no of enquiries	937	2,734	3,671	3,372

* There are 3 open cases where the outcome is not yet complete.

Figure 2: Formal complaints received by site

	April to June 2013	July 2013 to March 2014	2013-14	2012-13
Worthing	89	248	337	336
Southlands	-	7	7	19
St Richard's	52	126	178	210
Total	141	381	522	565

Figure 3: Top 5 enquiries (PALS & complaints) received by category

	April to June 2013	July 2013 to March 2014	2013-14	2012-13
Communication	252	582	834	789
Clinical Treatment	212	620	832	791
Appointments	220	662	882	605
Attitude of Staff	59	163	222	183
Date of Admission	42	132	174	285

Figure 4: Formal complaints referred to the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Declined/not upheld	13	12	13
Further local resolution taken by trust	2	4	1
Upheld/recommendations made	-	-	1
Decision awaited	2	-	-
Total	17	16	15

Figure 5: National Benchmark

Point of delivery	No of complaints	Complaints Average for last 12 months	Complaints National	No of PALS	PALS Average for last 12 months	PALS National
Inpatients (per 1000 admits)	243	2.02	2.28	542	4.52	No benchmark
Outpatients (per 10,000 OP attends)	187	9.77	13.83	842	44.00	

* excludes DNAs and cancellations in outpatients

* includes day cases for inpatients

CONCLUSION

The Trust is now reporting its fourth year whereby no complaints referred to the PHSO have been upheld. This reflects the quality of investigation, response and the learning of the complaint and that the Ombudsman has supported the Trust. In almost 90% of cases referred to the Ombudsman, the case was turned down and in the remaining few, the trust was asked to complete some further local resolution work, which was completed successfully. In line with the response to the Francis Inquiry the Trust are commissioning external reviews of complaints where appropriate and the outcome of these have been supportive of the complaints process.

The number of formal complaints decreased by 8% compared with the previous year.

The trust has increased the profile of the PALS service and the number of general enquiries and help being given to people has subsequently increased. There are plans to relocate the PALS office on the Worthing site in 2014/15 to be more central within the hospital.

Feedback from patients and relatives about their experience of using the complaints procedure commenced during the year in the form of an independent survey issued to complainants by the Patients Association, an independent charity. The results of these surveys will be available shortly and will be shared as part of the governance reporting requirements with the Patient Experience & Feedback Committee.

During the year, the Board invited a number of complainants to share their stories at a board meeting which was a powerful way for the trust to revisit experiences of patients and relatives and ensure lessons were learnt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

Tracey Nevell

Customer Relations Manager

September 2014