



Independent Complaints Information on Trust Website Audit

January 17

Introduction

Complaints, their source, their handling and their outcome provide an insight into the effectiveness of an organisation's ability to uphold both the fundamental standards and the culture of caring. They are a source of information that has hitherto been undervalued as a source of accountability and a basis for improvement.

Francis Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry Executive summary (1.152 p72)

This report looks independently at the policies of NHS Trusts' working across West Sussex to see what may work well for patients and what may not.

Trust findings

Healthwatch West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) carried out a search of the following NHS Trusts' website to find their Complaints Policy and reviewed the policies that we could download in November 2016:

- Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Foundation
- Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust
- Surrey and Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Western Sussex Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

We visited each Trust website, used their site's search facility (where available) we entered 'complain', followed by 'complaints' and then 'Making a complaint' to find information. It is on these search words we have drawn our conclusions on the accessibility of each Trusts' complaints service.





Where we were unable to find information with these searches we tried other ways of finding complaints information.

We have detailed recommendations under each Trust, if applicable.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

BSUH provides District General Hospital services to Brighton and Hove the west of East Sussex and Mid Sussex as well as more specialised services across the south of England.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
The website search found complaint information promptly, which you can then follow to a downloadable Leaflet	The Complaints Policy is less easy to read
Provides some helpful and clear information in the downloadable How Can I Make a Complaint? Leaflet	Uses abbreviations of advocates without clarification.
Provides contact details of advocacy services but West Sussex details need changing.	
Includes detailed time limits	
Provides options for different languages	
Makes it clear in the leaflet that peoples' treatment will not be affected if they raise a complaint.	
Timescales for the process are included.	

The leaflet contained clear, concise information that was easy to read and understand, and includes an account of the possible time limits, as well as providing an option for the leaflet to be in a different language.

The complaints webpage provides less information than other Trusts.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details on website and in the *How to Make a Complaint?* Leaflet (see final page).

We recommend the Trust reviews its Complaints Policy to make it accessible to the public and comply with the Accessible Information Standard guidelines.





Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (QVH)

Queen Victoria Hospital is a specialist NHS hospital providing life-changing reconstructive surgery, burns care and rehabilitation services for people across the South of England.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
Searching for complaints information was found promptly, which was easy to read	Complaint documents were hard to find. A search on 'complaints policy' comes up empty
Do you have a comment or complaint? Leaflet was accessible and had contact details. This includes timescales within the process.	The full complaints policy is not listed under their policies
Leaflet offers a phone in alternative to posting a written complaint.	There is not a way of making a complaint online
There was an easy read leaflet available	Advocacy support information is correct for East Sussex residents but not West Sussex. However, the document does have Healthwatch West Sussex contact details

The website did not provide an online copy of QVH's complaint policy. However, the complaint information leaflet was easier to find. The leaflet contained some helpful information but was very difficult to read as the writing was cramped together.

We ask the Trust to update the advocacy section in the 'Do you have a comment or complaint?' Leaflet with the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details (see final page).





South East Coast Ambulance Trust (SECAMB)

This Trust provides ambulance services for the South East of England, including 111 and 999. It also provides non-emergency patient transport services but not in Sussex.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
There are contact details on the website	Complaints information cannot be found using our search words. We did find it under the ' <i>Contact Us</i> ' tab.
There is a How the Trust Deals with Complaints Leaflet on the website.	This is not, we feel, a particularly patient/public friendly document. The Leaflet states you can request a copy of the complaints policy, yet the website has a click here to the policy. However, clicking on the link gets the following " <i>The requested document is not available, or you don't have permission to view it.</i> "
Webpage provides contacts for advocacy services	The Trust's leaflet does not have any advocacy support information
Trust information provides time limits	

The Trust's complaint Leaflet appears to be written in a very formal way and we **recommend** the Trust reviews this document, to make it more accessible and engaging to the patients and their representatives.

The website provides a link to a downloadable document outlining the complaint process, however this link did not work restricting the amount of information available. We **recommend** this link issue is promptly resolved.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details (see final page).





Surrey and Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (SASH)

This Trust provides acute and complex services at East Surrey Hospital (Redhill) and a range of outpatient, diagnostics and less complex planned services in Surrey, and at Crawley and Horsham Hospitals.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
Complaints information was found promptly, leading to the downloadable and very accessible Listening to You Leaflet	Some jargon within the policy
We found a full copy of the Complaints Policy	Document is justified and could benefit from better spacing
Complaint forms are readable and easy to use and you can make a complaint using an online form	Long document with some unnecessary information
Provides a good amount of information regarding the complaint process	
Includes possible training and development plans	
Provides alternative advocacy services and Ombudsman	

Overall the policy provides a detailed account of the Trust’s complaint process, including some advocacy services and the Ombudsman Service. There are set time limits to provide an idea of how long a complaint process could last, along with a small paragraph on the potential training and development from complaints.

The Leaflet is both clear and informative, it includes a statement that a patient’s treatment will not be affected if they raise a concern or complaint. It is best practice to contact people to find out what outcome they are looking for and we would **recommend** including this in the leaflet.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details (see final page).

We would **recommend** the Trust looks to remove any jargon, technical language and duplications, to increase the accessibility of the full policy for the public.





Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT)

This Trust is the main provider of NHS community health and care services across West Sussex, providing a wide range of medical, nursing and therapeutic care.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
Complaints information was found promptly. Introductory information about comments and complaints was easy to read	Small writing, which would not meet the Accessible Information Standard guidelines (minimum font 12)
Patient and Advice Liaison Service (PALs) and easy read leaflets are available but do not give much information	Does not contain a lot of useful information
Advocacy support information is available but needs to be update	Link to government legislation
Patients, or their representatives can make complaints online	Does not provide information on time limits
	No statement in leaflet that makes it clear treatment will not be affected if a patient makes a complaint

It was not possible to find the Trust’s actual complaint policy on the website and therefore we were unable to look at this without formally requesting a copy.

The information on complaints is very limited, through the website and leaflets. There were links to the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. The format of the legislation information, within the links, may be confusing to some people as the regulations contain legal jargon that may not be public knowledge.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details on website and in the PALS leaflet and easy read leaflet (see final page).

We **recommend** the Trust reviews its PALs leaflet and includes a downloadable and accessible version of its Complaints Policy, so that patients and their representatives can be more informed about the process and time limits.





Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT)

This Trust provides mental health care and treatment, as well as home care for children, young adults and adults of all ages across West Sussex.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
Complaints information was found promptly. The webpage was very visual, prompting listening to patients and their representatives. Complaints was easy to read	The Experiencing Difficulties With Our Services Leaflet does not appear to be with the webpage for complaints and only covers the support of PALs
Contact information is clear and easy to navigate through	There is not a clear statement that a patient's treatment will not be affected if they make a complaint
Details of advocacy support are available	Could not find the actual Complaints Policy
Timescales are included	

The complaints information was very clear and easy to follow. We **recommend** extending the current leaflet to include more information about making a complaint, so patients and their representatives can be more informed.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details (see final page).



Western Sussex Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (WSHFT)

This Trust provides healthcare services in Chichester, Worthing and Shoreham-by-Sea.

Accessibility

Positives	Less than positives
Complaints information was found promptly. Introductory information about comments and complaints was easy to read	Complaints Policy does not meet the Accessible Information Standard guidelines
Webpage was clear and easy to read. There was a clear statement that a patient's treatment would not be affected if they raised a complaint	Some of the information is not clear enough, jargon is used and some of the information appears unnecessary
Consisted of clear well written information	
Complaints Policy is easy to download.	
Provides contacts for several advocacy services	

The Trust's website was well presented and easy to navigate, with large fonts and clear well written information. The Trust's full policy information was provided as a downloadable document but we could not find a downloadable leaflet.

We **recommend** the Trust reviews the layout and content of the Complaints Policy using the Accessible Information Standard guidelines, to make this more accessible to patients and the public to help them understand how the Trust deals with complaints.

We **recommend** the Trust consider creating a patient friendly leaflet, so people can download a document to help them understand how to make a complaint or raise a concern.

We ask the Trust to update the West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) contact details (see final page).





Contact Details

You can contact Healthwatch West Sussex and the Health Complaints Advocacy Service:

Healthwatch West Sussex
Billingshurst Community Centre
Roman Way
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 9QW
Phone number: 0300 012 0122

Email: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

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Healthwatch West Sussex CIC sub-contracts to Help & Care to provide its statutory activities. The contact details are:



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