Complaints Policy

Policy Owner	Patient Experience Manager
Date of policy	Oct 2026
Frequency of review	2 years
Date of last review	April 2026
Date of next review	Oct 2028

Information for patients
If you have a complaint, concern or feedback about the care or service you have received from Living Well Partnership (LWP), or a complaint, concern or feedback about how we use your data, please let us know.

We operate a complaints procedure in line with NHS guidance to ensure that:

- Complainants receive clear information about the complaints process and available support.
- Complaints are acknowledged, investigated and responded to appropriately.
- Complaints are handled efficiently and fairly.
- Patients are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect throughout the process.
- Patients are kept informed of progress and the outcome of their complaint.
- Appropriate learning and action are taken where required.
- A patient's care or treatment is not adversely affected because they have raised a concern or complaint.

Giving feedback
Patient feedback helps us improve the quality of care and services we provide.

Feedback can be provided through:

- Letter
- Email
- The Friends and Family Test.
- Google Reviews.
- Automated text message surveys following appointments.
- Feedback forms available at our practice sites.
- Speaking directly with a member of staff.

We hope that most concerns can be resolved promptly through informal discussion. If this is not possible, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

Making a complaint
If you wish to make a complaint, please do so **as soon as possible** to help us establish the facts efficiently.

Complaints should normally be made:

- Within 12 months of the incident giving rise to the complaint; or
- Within 12 months of the matter coming to your attention.

Complaints submitted outside these timescales may not be investigated.

Complaints should be submitted in writing, wherever possible, and addressed to:

Patient Experience Team
Email: hiowicb-hsi.livingwell.partnership@nhs.net

Where a complaint cannot be made in writing, a member of staff can record the details on your behalf.

If you would like to discuss your concerns before or during the complaints process, please contact the Patient Experience Team.

Alternatively, complaints may be submitted directly to:

Patient Experience and Complaints Team
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board
Omega House
112 Southampton Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO50 5PB

Telephone: 0300 561 2561
Email: hiowicb-hsi.patientexperience@nhs.net
Website: https://www.hantsiow.icb.nhs.uk/contact-us/patient-experience-and-complaints

Please note that Complaints should be raised **either with Living Well Partnership **or** the Integrated Care Board, **not both** simultaneously **

Complaints About Hospital Care and Other Healthcare Providers
Living Well Partnership is responsible only for the services that we provide directly. If your concerns relate to care, treatment, communication, appointment management, waiting times, referral processing after receipt by a hospital, or any other service provided by an external healthcare organisation, we would encourage you to raise your concerns directly with the organisation responsible for your care.

For concerns relating to services provided by **University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (Southampton General Hospital)**, patients should contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**, who can provide advice, support and assistance in resolving concerns.

Please note that Living Well Partnership cannot investigate, comment upon, or provide explanations for actions, decisions, waiting times, policies or standards of care delivered by external healthcare providers.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Hospital appointments and waiting lists.
- Diagnostic tests arranged and managed by a hospital.
- Decisions relating to specialist treatment.
- Hospital communication and administrative processes.
- Clinical care provided by hospital clinicians.
- Community, mental health, ambulance or other NHS provider services.

Where a complaint contains concerns relating to both Living Well Partnership and another healthcare provider, we will investigate only those aspects that fall within our remit. We may advise you to contact the relevant organisation directly regarding the remaining issues.

For concerns regarding services provided by **University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust**, please contact:

The Patient and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 023 8120 6325
Email: pals@uhs.nhs.uk

For concerns regarding services provided by **Portsmouth Hospitals Univeristy NHS Trust** please contact:

The Patient and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 023 9228 6000 (ext. 3473)
Email: pho-tr.phucomplaints@nhs.net

For concerns regarding services provided by **Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** please contact:

Telephone: 01256 486766 - phonelines are open Monday to Thursday (excluding bank holidays) from 10am to 3pm only.
Email:PALSandcomplaints@hhft.nhs.uk

By directing concerns to the organisation responsible for the service in question, patients are more likely to receive a timely and accurate response from those directly involved in their care.

What We Will Do
We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days** of receipt.

When investigating a complaint, we aim to:

- Establish what happened and whether anything went wrong.
- Provide an explanation and apology where appropriate.
- Identify any lessons learned.
- Implement improvements where necessary.

The time required to complete an investigation will depend on the complexity of the issues raised and duration. We will keep you informed of any significant delays. If an investigation remains ongoing after six months, we will provide an explanation and an update on progress.

Complaints Made on Behalf of Another Person
Living Well Partnership is bound by patient confidentiality rules and legally require patient consent to discuss complaints with a third party.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone aged 16 or over, we will normally require their written consent before investigating the matter, unless they lack capacity to provide consent.

Consent is required even where permission exists to discuss other aspects of the patient's care.

If consent is not received within two months of our request, we may close the complaint.

Children under the age of 16 may make a complaint in their own right where appropriate.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)
Some individuals may hold a **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)** for another person. Whilst an LPA may enable an individual to make decisions on behalf of someone else, it does not automatically allow access to health information in all circumstances.

An LPA for Health and Welfare generally becomes relevant when a patient has been assessed and is found to lack the mental capacity to make the specific decision concerned at the time it needs to be made. Capacity is assessed in accordance with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and cannot be assumed solely because a person has a medical condition, disability or advancing age.

Where a patient is assessed as having capacity, they are expected to make their own decisions regarding their healthcare and complaints. In these circumstances, we will normally require the

patient's explicit consent before discussing their medical information or investigating a complaint on their behalf.

Where a patient lacks capacity and a valid Health and Welfare LPA is in place, we will request a copy of the registered LPA document before releasing confidential information or progressing a complaint made on the patient's behalf.

The practice reserves the right to seek further information where necessary to verify an individual's authority to act on behalf of a patient and to ensure compliance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Court-Appointed Deputies (Deputyship Orders)
In some circumstances, the Court of Protection may appoint a Deputy to make decisions on behalf of a person who lacks mental capacity. A Deputy's authority is determined by the specific powers granted within the Deputyship Order and may relate to Property and Financial Affairs, Personal Welfare, or both.

Where an individual states that they are acting as a Court-Appointed Deputy, the practice will request a copy of the Deputyship Order to verify their authority. The practice will review the scope of the order before disclosing confidential information or progressing a complaint on the patient's behalf.

As with a Lasting Power of Attorney, the existence of a Deputyship Order does not automatically entitle an individual to access all aspects of a patient's health information. The practice must be satisfied that the patient lacks the relevant mental capacity and that the Deputy has the legal authority to make decisions or receive information relating to the matter in question.

The practice reserves the right to seek further information where necessary to verify an individual's authority to act on behalf of a patient and to ensure compliance with confidentiality, data protection legislation, and the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in patient correspondence
Living Well Partnership recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can assist patients with drafting correspondence, improving grammar and organising information.

However, we encourage patients to ensure that any correspondence submitted to the practice accurately reflects their own experiences, concerns and desired outcomes

AI-generated correspondence can occasionally:

- Contain inaccurate assumptions or information.
- Misinterpret NHS or practice procedures.
- Refer to legislation, policies or guidance that may not be relevant.
- Adopt a tone that is more formal, adversarial or confrontational than intended.

To help us investigate concerns effectively, we ask patients to explain:

- What happened.
- Why they are concerned.
- What outcome they are seeking.

Clear and concise complaints are often the most effective way for us to understand concerns and provide a meaningful response.

Whilst we are committed to thoroughly investigating all complaints, excessively lengthy, repetitive or complex correspondence may significantly increase the time required to identify and investigate the key issues raised. In such circumstances, we may ask the complainant to provide a concise summary of their concerns before an investigation proceeds.

This approach helps ensure complaints are addressed fairly and in a timely manner while allowing practice resources to remain focused on delivering patient care.

Protecting personal information

Patients and their representatives should carefully consider the privacy implications of using AI tools.

Before uploading information to any third-party AI platform, please consider whether the information contains:

- Personal data.
- Health information.
- Confidential information relating to family members.
- Information relating to members of practice staff.

Sensitive and personal information should not be shared unnecessarily.

Respectful communication

We are committed to treating all patients with courtesy, dignity and respect and ask that the same courtesy is extended to our staff.

All communication, whether verbal or written, should remain polite, respectful and constructive, even where there is disagreement or frustration.

Respectful dialogue helps us understand concerns, resolve issues effectively and maintain positive working relationships with our patients.

Help with making a complaint

If you require support or independent advice about making a complaint, the following organisations may be able to assist:

Healthwatch Hampshire
Website: www.healthwatchhampshire.co.uk
Telephone: 01962 440262

Citizens Advice
Telephone: 0800 144 8848
You can also contact your local authority, which can direct you to the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service available in your area.

If you remain dissatisfied
We hope that concerns can be resolved through our complaints process, providing an opportunity both to address your concerns and improve our services.
If you remain dissatisfied after receiving our final response, you may refer your complaint to the:

Public Service Ombudsman
Citygate
51 Mosley Street
Manchester
M2 3HQ
Telephone: 0345 015 4033
Website: https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint

The Public Service Ombudsman is independent of the NHS and can review complaints that have not been resolved locally.