

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title:	Complaints Team Manager
Grade:	Band 7
Hours:	37.5
Responsible to:	Incidents and Complaints Manager
Accountable to:	Associate Director of Governance & Risk Management
Location:	Trust Headquarters

JOB SUMMARY

The post holder will manage the complaints and PALS staff, manage and coordinate high graded, complex and contentious complaints, be responsible for liaison with and response to the Ombudsman and manage complaints sent via MPs. The post holder will be the Trust's expert source of practical and theoretical knowledge on complaints regulations and procedure, will be responsible for Trust-wide complaints handling training, will lead on the dissemination of lessons learned from complaints and will work closely with the PPI teams to promote learning and reduce the number of formal complaints.

The department operates in a very busy and politically sensitive environment, to tight deadlines, serving a range of audiences and as such the post holder will require developed interpersonal and communication skills in dealing with what are frequently complex or sensitive situations. The post holder will evaluate information and make judgements involving complex facts or situations which may require in depth analysis and interpretation.

There will be frequent exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances as a result of complaints received. This will include liaison with staff who are often distressed or defensive as a result of a complaint. There will be occasional exposure to highly distressing or highly emotional circumstances, including dealing with complainants with severely challenging behaviour and communicating with relatives of a deceased person

There will be a frequent requirement for concentration where the work pattern is unpredictable, due to the need to be accessible to complainants and staff, and the nature of complaints handling.

The post holder's responsibilities relate to complaints received from service users, carers, families, members of the public, MPs, advocates and agencies regarding all Trust services. The work of the post holder will impact across the whole organisation and will have an impact on the delivery of services

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Colleagues in the complaints team, members of the incident grading panel, staff at all levels within the Trust, Ombudsman, MPs, service users and their families or carers, general public, advocates, Serious Incident Reviewers, RiO team and external agencies

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Expertise, training and communication

- Proactively be the lead source of expertise on complaints regulations and handling, ensuring that any new regulations or processes are effectively communicated and embedded across the organisation
- Take the lead on providing a robust high quality training programme on complaints handling and investigation for a wide range of individuals with differing priorities and levels of understanding
- Analyse and identify issues of concern arising from complaints, share areas of good practice, be aware of trends and make recommendations for remedial action. This involves making judgements involving complex facts or situations which require the analysis, interpretation and comparison of a range of options
- Ensure that lessons are learned from complaints through feedback to services, communications briefings, formal reports and trust-wide learning lessons seminars, working closely with the serious incident reviewers where cross cutting themes emerge
- Proactively attend healthcare governance meetings across the Trust to support complaints resolution and learning
- Ensure the PALS Officer embeds a culture where potential complaints are resolved at an early informal stage, including providing training on complaints resolution
- Work closely with the PPI leads to better understand the key issues for service users
- Have day to day corporate responsibility for complaints policy, ensuring that policies are developed, reviewed and maintained appropriately in accordance with standards set by the Department Health, Ombudsman and internally

Complaints assessment

- Working with the Incidents and Complaints Manager, assess and grade all complaints on receipt so that they are appropriately disseminated and managed according to the grading assigned

Ombudsman

- Take responsibility for liaison with and resolution of communication received from the Ombudsman to minimise any distress to staff or complainants, or any reputational damage to the Trust
- Provide expertise and work closely with senior contacts in the Trust, often in difficult and contentious circumstances, to ensure that correspondence from the Ombudsman is appropriately dealt with, that documentation provided is relevant, appropriate and of high quality and that responses are made within required time frames
- Ensure that any recommendations from the Ombudsman are acted upon

MPs

- Be responsible for complaints received from MPs on behalf of their constituents, ensuring that appropriate consent is in place and that both MPs and constituent complainants are communicated with in a timely manner according to their wishes

High graded, complex and contentious complaints

- Be responsible for complaints that are assessed as high graded, complex or contentious, are from serial complainants or as a result of previous unsatisfactory efforts to resolve

Complaints handling standards for areas of responsibility

- Review and analyse investigation reports and produce high quality responses to complaints for the Chief Executive's signature. This involves making judgements involving complex facts or situations, which require analysis, interpretation and comparison of a range of options.
- Work closely with complainants and their representatives to ensure appropriate consent is obtained, that any delays are minimised, communicated and that they are not adversely treated as a result of having complained
- Chair, facilitate and participate in meetings with complainants and their representatives. This may include taking minutes
- Scrutinise complaints for any risk/assurance issues that need to be communicated to the Assurance Department or other relevant staff (eg Local Security Management Specialist) and liaise with them to ensure appropriate handling under complaints and risk management procedures
- Scrutinise complaints for issues that may expose the Trust to adverse media publicity and advise the Communications Department appropriately.
- Scrutinise complaints for legal issues and advise the corporate legal affairs team appropriately.
- Ensure that requests from complainants for compensation and recommendations for financial redress from the Health Service Ombudsman are brought to the attention of the corporate legal affairs team for consideration.
- Alert the corporate legal affairs team of any complaints made by relatives where the deceased is the subject of an inquest
- Provide advice and support to service users and their families where they are experiencing significant distress, liaising with clinical and emergency services as appropriate

Communication

- Communicate with staff, service users, their families, carers or representatives, and members of the public regarding the NHS Complaints Procedure and the Trust's Complaints Policy and Procedure using a range of media.
- Communicate complex, sensitive and contentious information regarding complaints, including where there are significant barriers to understanding and acceptance, and in a hostile, antagonistic or highly emotive atmosphere.
- Present complex information to large groups, including presentations at induction and staff meetings.

- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained in accordance with relevant legislation and Trust policies and procedures

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

- Manage the Patient Advice and Liaison Service , ensuring that issues raised by service users, carers and members of the public are dealt with in an efficient, timely and effective manner in accordance with the Trust procedures
- Ensure processes and procedures are in place to assist service users, relatives and members of the public to express their views easily and accurately about services provided by the Trust, and to access the formal complaints process
- Ensure that the Trust has suitable and accessible information about PALS procedures, including where there are significant barriers to understanding
- Negotiate, administer and manage protocols with other providers and agencies for the management of PALS queries involving the Trust's services
- Manage the PALS Officer who provide these public facing services

Budgets

- Effectively manage the complaints budget in relation to funding for own areas of responsibility
- Act as an authorised signatory for timesheets

General

- Day-to-day staff line management
- All members of the Assurance team are required to provide cover which may require answering the telephone, routine administration, unlocking Smartcards, taking minutes or undertaking any other Assurance related duties

Senior Complaints Officer

Person Specification

Specification	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Educated to degree level in a relevant subject or have considerable relevant expertise	
Knowledge and Experience	<p>High level understanding of the essential principles and components of the NHS Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>Significant senior management experience in NHS Complaints handling.</p> <p>Demonstrable experience of handling complex or contentious complaints</p> <p>Experience in developing systems demonstrated by the ability for problem solving in ensuring compliance with legislation and with local and national policy and procedures.</p> <p>Significant experience of providing advice and support to staff during investigations.</p> <p>Experience in delivering training.</p> <p>Extensive experience in staff management.</p> <p>Knowledge of the issues concerning people with mental health problems.</p> <p>Significant experience of dealing with complainants and liaising with individuals and organisations acting on their behalf</p> <p>Knowledge of confidentiality codes, procedures and legislation</p> <p>Demonstrable experience of managing multiple priorities</p>	<p>Experience of working with people with mental health problems</p> <p>Knowledge of the Mental Health Act 1983 and associated legislation</p> <p>Understanding the essential principles and components of legal protocols and procedures</p> <p>Knowledge of role of the Coroner</p> <p>Experience at reporting at Board/committee level</p>

	<p>whilst delivering on time</p> <p>Experience of managing complaints from MPs</p> <p>Experience of managing Ombudsman communication</p>	
Skills	<p>Skills in administering and complying with detailed procedures</p> <p>Excellent written skills, including drafting of investigation report, letters and board/committee reports</p> <p>Excellent verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate with staff at all levels of the organisation, service users and members of the public</p> <p>Ability to communicate complex, sensitive and contentious information where there are significant barriers to understanding and acceptance and in a hostile, antagonistic or highly emotive atmosphere</p> <p>Able to create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships</p> <p>Proven record in relationships at a senior level</p> <p>Ability to plan, chair and manage meetings effectively</p> <p>Ability to manage and deescalate aggressive behaviour.</p> <p>Ability to develop systems and policies in line with Trust strategy to enhance quality of service delivery</p> <p>Ability to ensure the service is responsive to change and to anticipate/react to change with particular reference to relevant policy/legislation</p> <p>Ability to develop and facilitate training</p>	

	<p>Ability to give presentations to individuals and groups</p> <p>Good analytical and numerical skills</p> <p>Excellent IT skills</p> <p>Ability to work to deadlines under pressure</p> <p>Ability to effectively respond to emergency situations</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate empathy, tact and firmness across a range of situations</p> <p>Ability to deliver on time</p>	
Personal	<p>High levels of diplomacy and tact</p> <p>Persuasive, negotiating, empathetic and re-assurance skills</p> <p>Ability to react to unpredictable situations/behaviour</p> <p>Ability to deal with distress/aggressive individuals</p> <p>Ability to overcome barriers to understanding</p> <p>Commitment to the provision of health services to the local community</p> <p>Understand the concept and importance of confidentiality</p> <p>Able to develop effective working relationships with staff from a variety of agencies and disciplines</p> <p>Flexible approach to work</p> <p>A commitment to Equal Opportunities</p>	