

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: PALS & Complaints Officer

BAND: AfC 5

REPORTING TO: Complaints Team Manager

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Incidents & Complaints Manager

JOB SUMMARY: The PALS & Complaints Officer is the main point of contact for individuals wishing to raise concerns or seeking advice or information about Trust services. The post holder is required to adopt a flexible and supportive approach to resolving requests for information regarding Trust services via the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or its complaints functions.

The post holder provides a visible and effective service by ensuring patients, their families, carers and representatives, and the public have access to and receive high quality and timely information and signposting about the Trust, related health and social care services, and their own personal information.

The post holder is an essential point of contact in working closely with front line staff to receive, manage and respond to formal and informal enquiries and complaints in line with Trust policy and procedure and NHS Complaints Regulations.

This role provides the main interface with complainants, some of whom may be challenging. It is therefore vital the post holder is a good listener and effective team player. A professional, caring and respectful manner must be demonstrated at all times.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: Colleagues in the Assurance team, Chief Executive, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nurse Officer, clinicians and staff at all levels in the Trust, Legal Affairs team, colleagues from the Commissioning Support Unit and other relevant agencies.

Post holders may come into contact with patients, their carers / family, with advocates and with staff who may express a range of emotions including distress or anger as a result of an incident, breach of confidentiality or alleged failing in care. The ability to act with diplomacy, empathy and professionalism is expected at all times

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

PALS

- Be the key point of contact for patients, their representatives and the general public who information about Trust services. This will involve managing requests for information submitted in person, by telephone, email, letter or Trust feedback form
- Be responsible for listening, understanding and analysing problems, questions or requests being presented by patients and their representatives, the public and staff, assess individual situations to differentiate between issues that can be resolved on the spot and those that warrant further investigation or resolution
- Provide comprehensive information or signposting to patients, their representatives and the general public about Trust services generally, specific information about the services they access and about health related issues generally including access to other health related agencies and services
- Resolve patients concerns quickly and effectively and negotiate solutions to ensure practical and appropriate advice and support is given
- Advise patients and their families on their rights in relation to the NHS and the services available to them, provide options for resolving their concerns and provide practical help in navigating the health care economy
- Build and maintain good relationships with clinical and non-clinical staff across the Trust to help resolve patients concerns quickly and efficiently, negotiate solutions on their behalf and ensure they receive practical advice and support in a sensitive, appropriate and effective way
- Have a working knowledge of local and national advocacy and voluntary organisations in order to signpost patients, relatives, carers and the general public to those services when appropriate
- Provide information or access to independent information to patients, their carers and families, and the general public
- Negotiate solutions and deal positively with any conflict that might arise
- Help individuals to access the complaints process if they wish to do so
- Exercise high levels of concentration given the unpredictable nature of the work. The post holder must be able to prioritise and manage the competing demands of their workload
- Be the main interface for individuals wishing to make a formal complaint, exercising good listening skills, empathy and firmness, together with an ability to know when a situation needs escalation
- Work closely with the PPI leads in Directorates to promote improved outcomes for patients and carers and improve service user and carer experience through new insights and perspectives
- Manage the PALS database, ensuring that requests for information are correctly entered and maintained, that reports on requests are run and trends analysed and acted upon
- Take a proactive approach to quality improvement so that emerging issues are addressed and managed and there is a customer focussed inclusive approach

- Arrange surveys, feedback sessions and open forums so that improvements to services are made and lessons learned
- Manage the PALS intranet and website pages
- Provide high quality responses to compliments received about Trust services

COMPLAINTS

- Be the first point of contact for individuals or their representatives wishing to raise a concern or complaint regarding a Trust service
- Provide non-clinical advice to patients/service users or carers and be responsible for escalating a concern or complaint where patient safety appears to be at risk
- Manage a caseload of individual complaints from initial contact to liaising with and advising clinicians and senior managers who are responsible for providing investigation reports and complaints responses. This will include administrative logging on Datix, initial investigation planning including identification of key issues to be addressed and the reviewing of investigations to ensure they cover all aspects of the original complaint
- Input and maintain up to date comprehensive records on Datix including complaints logging, recording of subjects, recommendations, outcomes and learning
- Draft high quality responses for the Chief Executive's signature on receipt of complaints investigations reports
- Ensure that all cases are produced and dispatched within the time limits of the NHS Complaints procedure to required standards
- Communicate verbally and in writing with complainants to discuss the management of their complaint and offer information on the process that will be followed
- Ensure that complainants are not adversely treated as a result of having complained
- Ensure that complainants are kept informed at all stages of the progress of their complaint including when changes or delays occur within the agreed timescale
- Liaise with all levels of staff across the organisation to ensure that complaints are handled speedily and effectively
- Work closely with Directorates that use QI methodology for complaints handling
- Liaise with services to ensure actions arising from recommendations are completed on time
- Contribute to learning lessons events so that local actions can be implemented across the Trust
- Support the KO41 process, ensuring that all required information is in place
- Coordinate meetings between complainants and services, chairing or taking notes where required
- Work with Non Executive Directors to undertake the annual NEDS complaints audit

- Develop and deliver training and awareness programmes for effective complaints resolution to a wide range of audiences with varying degrees of commitment and understanding
- Proactively maintain the Trust's intranet and website complaints pages
- Undertake complainant satisfaction surveys, analyse and communicate the results, making recommendations for improvement where necessary
- Work closely with dedicated complaints / governance leads across the Trust to improve the quality of complaints resolution
- Provide regular detailed complaints reports to the Senior Complaints Officer about complaints responses met within deadlines and details of missed target dates
- Work with the Datix Manager to set up dashboards and automatic reports to assist Directorates manage their complaints
- Provide reports and information for corporate reporting purposes such as the quarterly learning from complaints report for Quality Committee
- Provide administrative support for the Learning From Complaints Committee
- Maintain an up to date knowledge of the NHS Complaints Regulations, PHSO requirements etc

GENERAL

All members of the Assurance team are required to provide cover which may require at any time answering the telephone, routine administration, unlocking Smartcards, taking minutes or undertaking any other Assurance related duties

The Incidents Assistant is expected to provide a full administrative support service within normal working hours which will include working on a rotational basis to ensure cover is provided.

TRUST POLICES

Confidentiality & Data Protection

All employees must abide by the principles outlined in the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as per the Trust's Information Security Policy.

In the course of your employment you may become aware of information, including medical information, relating to patients, visitors or members of staff. Such information is confidential, and must not be passed on to anyone other than those authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. Staff are reminded that a breach of their duty of confidentiality could lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

All information and data, made or received by you and kept in whatever form, concerning the business of the Trust shall be the property of the Trust. When required, or on the termination of your employment you shall give all such information and data to your manager. You shall also return all Trust equipment issued to you during the course of your employment.

You must not remove any documents, computer disks/tapes or other electronic storage device containing any confidential information from any of the organisations premises at any time without proper advanced authorisation. Where authorisation is granted and the documents are in electronic format, you must transport them in an encrypted format to current NHS standards. For paper copies, these must be transported in a secure, robust envelope/container.

All records, both paper and electronic, must not be left unattended or in an unsecure location at any

time. All such documents, computer disks/tapes or other electronic storage devices and copies are the property of the employer, as is any other material whatsoever in your possession relating to the organisation or its personnel, suppliers, clients or affairs.

Data Protection – Your Data

As part of your employment with the Trust we will need to maintain personal information relating to your work on your personal file. You have a right to request access to your personal file via the Human Resources Department.

Health & Safety

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974), it is the responsibility of individual employees at every level to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts and omissions at work. This includes co-operating with management in complying with health and safety obligations to maintain a safe environment and particularly by reporting promptly any defects, risks or potential hazards.

You must co-operate with Management in discharging its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and ensure the agreed safety procedures are carried out to maintain a safe environment for patients, employees and visitors.

Equal Opportunities

The post holder must comply with and promote the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and avoid any behaviour which discriminates against colleagues, potential employees, patients or clients on the grounds of gender, sexuality, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability or social class.

You are at all times required to carry out your responsibilities with due regard to the Trusts Equal Opportunities Policy and to ensure that staff receive equal treatment throughout their employment with the Trust.

Conflict of Interests

You are not precluded from accepting employment outside your position with the Trust. However such other employment must not in any way hinder or conflict with the interests of your work for the Trust and must be with the knowledge of your line manager.

Risk Management

Risk Management involves the culture, processes and structures that are directed towards the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects. Every employee must co-operate with the Trust to enable all statutory duties to be applied and work to standards set out in the Risk Management Strategy.

Personal and Professional Development/Investors in People

The Trust is accredited as an Investor in People employer and is consequently committed to developing its staff. You will have access to appropriate development opportunities from the Trust's training programme as identified within your knowledge and skills appraisal/personal development plan.

Infection Control

Infection Control is everyone's responsibility. All staff, both clinical and non clinical, are required to adhere to the Trusts' Infection Prevention and Control Policies and make every effort to maintain high standards of infection control at all times thereby reducing the burden of all Healthcare Associated Infections including MRSA. In particular, all staff have the following key responsibilities:

Staff must observe stringent hand hygiene. Alcohol rub should be used on entry to and exit from all clinical areas. Hands should be washed before and after following all patient contact. Alcohol hand rub before and after patient contact may be used instead of hand washing in some clinical situations.

Staff members have a duty to attend infection control training provided for them by the Trust as set in the infection control policy.
Staff members who develop an infection that may be transmissible to patients have a duty to contact Occupational Health.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

To carry out responsibilities in such a way as to minimise risk of harm to children or young people and promote their welfare in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government 2010.HM Government 2010.

Smoking/Alcohol

The Trust provides a smoke-free work environment and has a No Smoking Policy in all its premises. Staff must not be on duty under the influence of alcohol.

Service User and Carer Involvement

ELFT is committed to developing effective user and carer involvement at all stages in the delivery of care. All employees are required to make positive efforts to support and promote successful user and carer participation as part of their day to day work

This Job Description is not meant as an exhaustive description of all aspects of your role as duties will vary according to the needs of the service. All such variations will be by reasonable request and agreement with your line manager and will be commensurate with the status and banding of the post.

Person Specification: PALS and Complaints Officer

	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria	How Tested
Education/ Qualifications	Educated to degree level or equivalent experience		Application Form Interview
Skills/Abilities	<p>Excellent standard of written and spoken English</p> <p>Good communication and interpersonal skills including the ability to listen and communicate effectively verbally and in writing.</p> <p>Empathy, ability to deal with distressed patients/relatives</p> <p>Good negotiation and conflict resolution skills to manage and de-escalate potentially difficult/contentious situations</p> <p>Ability to deal with disagreement/conflict and to mediate when service users and staff have differing perspectives</p> <p>Ability to prioritise and manage a number of conflicting requirements in a professional manner and deal with a number of issues at the same time</p> <p>Analytical skills to identify key facts from large amounts of information</p> <p>Able to work both cohesively within a small team and independently</p> <p>Computer Literacy/word processing skills</p> <p>Excellent and accurate data entry skills</p> <p>Ability to prioritise workload, and</p>		<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Test</p>

	<p>plan and organise own time effectively</p> <p>Exercise own judgment when dealing with enquiries from patients, carers or other professionals.</p> <p>Ability to act independently, and on own initiative</p> <p>Ability to work as part of a team</p> <p>Excellent organisational skills Ability to work flexibly & under pressure</p> <p>Ability to manage own workload without direct supervision</p> <p>Ability to work under pressure in a busy working environment</p> <p>Ability to multi task</p> <p>Ability to deal with phone calls from verbally abusive callers</p> <p>Ability to prepare and present complex information</p> <p>Ability to maintain an objective approach in gathering information following receipt of and investigation into complaints</p>		
Experience	<p>Experience of managing day to day routines associated with activities that have statutory or other deadlines</p> <p>Experience of using Datix complaints modules or other similar complaints systems</p> <p>Experience of arranging meetings</p> <p>Proven experience of working in a complaints or PALS role in a large NHS Trust</p>		<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p>

	Experience of researching / providing information and advice to patients and the public		
Knowledge/ Understanding	<p>Knowledge of administrative procedures</p> <p>Understanding of the principles of confidentiality</p> <p>Specialist knowledge of the NHS Complaints Regulations</p> <p>Understanding of MHA legislation</p>	Knowledge and understanding of medical terms	<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p>
Other	<p>Self motivation</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Attention to detail</p> <p>The ability to work credibly with Senior members of staff</p> <p>The ability to manage effective relationships with staff at all levels of the organisation and other external stakeholders</p>		<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p>