

The PALS team can offer you advice and support on making a formal complaint. If you decide at any stage that your PALS enquiry should be treated as a formal complaint, or if your enquiry cannot be resolved within 5 working days, PALS will liaise with colleagues in the Complaints team to make sure that all the necessary information is transferred promptly and securely.

Here are some examples of enquiries that PALS aim to resolve but are later treated as formal complaints:

- The response to your original request (eg for a different appointment date) has not been satisfactory and you wish to challenge the response.
- The concern you raised with PALS proves to be more complicated or serious than first expected. To provide a full explanation, the service needs to carry out a formal investigation over a period of weeks or months.
- You would like a detailed, written response to your enquiry.

Contacting PALS

You can visit PALS

9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday
in the PALS offices, next to Main Reception at both Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals.

You can telephone PALS

Monday – Friday
on 020 7188 8801 and leave a message if we are not able to take your call; someone will get back to you.

You can email PALS pals@gstt.nhs.uk

The PALS team check answer phone messages and emails throughout the day. However, if we are contacted after 4pm you might not receive a response until the following working day.

Further information

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815

f: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics.

Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

For more information about our services, please visit our website:
www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk



Guy's and St Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

PALS

(Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

PALS is the first point-of-contact for any assistance you might need as a patient, carer or visitor at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

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If you have any questions, compliments, concerns or complaints about Guy's and St Thomas', you are very welcome to discuss them with the PALS team. We will listen carefully to what you say, give information or advice and take action on your behalf.

We aim to answer your questions or resolve any concerns promptly, liaising with other teams and services where this is necessary.

Help and support

If you visit PALS in person or contact us by telephone or email, we will do everything possible to answer your enquiries promptly. This might involve finding information, or listening to your situation and giving advice or putting you in touch with other services.

Here are some examples of situations where PALS can answer an enquiry, often within a single visit or telephone call:

- You need to contact another hospital service.
- You have forgotten the date and time of your appointment.
- You would like a copy of an information leaflet about a health condition, treatment or hospital service.

Problem-solving

Sometimes a question or concern cannot be answered or resolved immediately. This might be because more time is needed to find the information you have asked for, or because your enquiry needs the attention of hospital staff who are not immediately available.

Here are some examples where PALS would need more time to resolve your enquiry:

- You would like to change the date of your appointment.
- You want advice about your clinical (health) condition from your doctor or specialist nurse.

- You have been referred to one of the hospitals for a procedure (operation) but have not yet been given a date.
- You would like help to resolve a concern about the care that you, or someone else, received in the past.

When can I expect my enquiry or concern to be answered?

If you contact us Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm, we will start working on your enquiry on the same day.

If you leave an answer phone message outside these hours, we will start work on your enquiry on the next working day.

If your question or concern requires the involvement of staff in any of our clinical services (doctors, nurses or service managers), those members of staff will take action as soon as possible. At the latest, you can expect to receive a response from a clinical service within 5 working days of contacting PALS.

What else can I expect from PALS?

- We will offer a supportive and non-judgemental response to your experience.
- We will take practical action to answer questions and resolve concerns.
- We will be visible and accessible. You can speak to a member of the team at the Guy's or St Thomas' PALS offices between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. If you cannot visit us because you are a patient on a ward, then a member of the team can arrange to visit you on the ward.

- We will respect your right to confidentiality and independence. This means that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will not share information or take action unless a patient has given consent (permission).
- If your question or concern is being addressed within a clinical service, we will liaise closely with the service to check that action is being taken.

Are there any concerns that PALS cannot resolve?

PALS cannot provide advocacy, diagnosis or medical advice. However, we can raise your concerns and questions with people who provide these services.

What is the difference between raising a concern with PALS and making a formal complaint?

PALS problem-solving is sometimes called 'informal resolution'. If a concern cannot be resolved informally through PALS' discussion and liaison with clinical services, you might wish to raise your concerns in a formal complaint.

A formal complaint is a longer-term investigation than a PALS case, and all communication throughout the process is followed up in writing. You can find out more about how to make a formal complaint by reading the patient information leaflet, **Making a complaint**. This leaflet is also available on the Guy's and St Thomas' website.