

Information for patients and visitors

Being Open (and the Duty of Candour) – Patient Safety

Directorate of Governance & Assurance



Information for patients and visitors

Being Open (and the Duty of Candour)

Each day more than a million people are treated safely in the NHS. Occasionally, something goes wrong and a patient is harmed.

If a patient is harmed as a result of a mistake or error in our care at Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust we believe that the patient, their family or those who care for them, should receive an apology, be kept fully informed as to what has happened, have their questions answered and know what is being done in response. This is something that we call “Being open” and we make a commitment to our patients to:

- apologise for the harm caused
- explain, openly and honestly, what has gone wrong
- describe what we are doing in response to the mistake
- offer support and direct you to counselling services that might be able to help
- provide the name of a person to speak to
- give updates on the results of any investigation

This approach has been reinforced by the duty of candour to be open with patients.

How You Can Help

1. Concerns

Speak up if you have any questions or concerns and if you don't understand something:

- Don't worry about being embarrassed
- Don't be afraid to ask about safety. If you are having surgery for example, ask your doctor to mark the area to be operated on so there is no confusion
- Don't hesitate to tell healthcare staff if you think you have been confused with another patient or if you think you have received the wrong medicine
- Tell the staff if something doesn't seem right

2. Your Treatment and Medication

Make sure you are clear about what treatment you have agreed to and don't be afraid to ask for further information.

- Make sure you are aware of any possible risks or complications your treatment may entail
- Expect healthcare staff to tell you who they are and look for their identification
- Make sure staff confirm your identity whenever they give you medicines or administer treatment
- Notice if staff wash their hands before and after your treatment – it's OK to remind staff to do this



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3. Your Diagnosis

Ask more questions, such as:

- How does your condition affect you?
- How is your condition treated?
- How should your condition respond to this treatment?
- Ask if there is any written information available to back up your discussion
- Gather information about your condition from reputable sources, such as well-researched studies, journals and books, expert groups and validated websites
- Write down the important facts so you can easily refer to them later
- Read all forms you are asked to sign and ask healthcare staff to explain if you don't understand anything
- Make sure you get your test results and don't assume 'no news is good news'
- If you have to use any equipment, make sure you understand what your role is

4. Your Advocate

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate or you could consider asking a hospital chaplain:

- Your advocate can ask questions for you if you are under stress
- Your advocate can help remember answers to questions you asked
- Make sure your advocate understands your preference for care

5. Your Medication or Treatment

Ask what the medicine or treatment is for, if there is any written information about it, and what possible side effects, complications or risks there may be:

- If you don't recognise the medicine verify that it is for you
- If you are having an IV (a drip or infusion pump) ask the nurse how long it is expected to last – don't be afraid to call someone if it appears to be going too quickly or too slowly
- Tell healthcare staff about your allergies and reactions
- If you are on multiple medicines ask staff whether they can be taken together
- Make sure you can read your prescription. if you can't read it your pharmacist might not be able to either

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6. Decisions Around Your Treatment

Agree with healthcare staff exactly what will be done during each step of your care:

- Know who will be taking care of you, how long the treatment will last and how you should feel
- Ask to speak to others who have undergone the procedure you are considering
- If you are told you require a follow up appointment and do not receive one please chase this up

7. Your Local NHS Organisation

Read the review of Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust by the Care Quality Commission www.cqc.org.uk/

View our website at www.nlg.nhs.uk/ for all the latest local information

8. Other Useful Contacts

The following **websites** are also useful for helping you search for reliable health information:

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/

www.patient.co.uk/

www.bbc.co.uk/health/

www.nice.org.uk/

www.netdoctor.co.uk/

NHS England www.england.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.



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Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

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