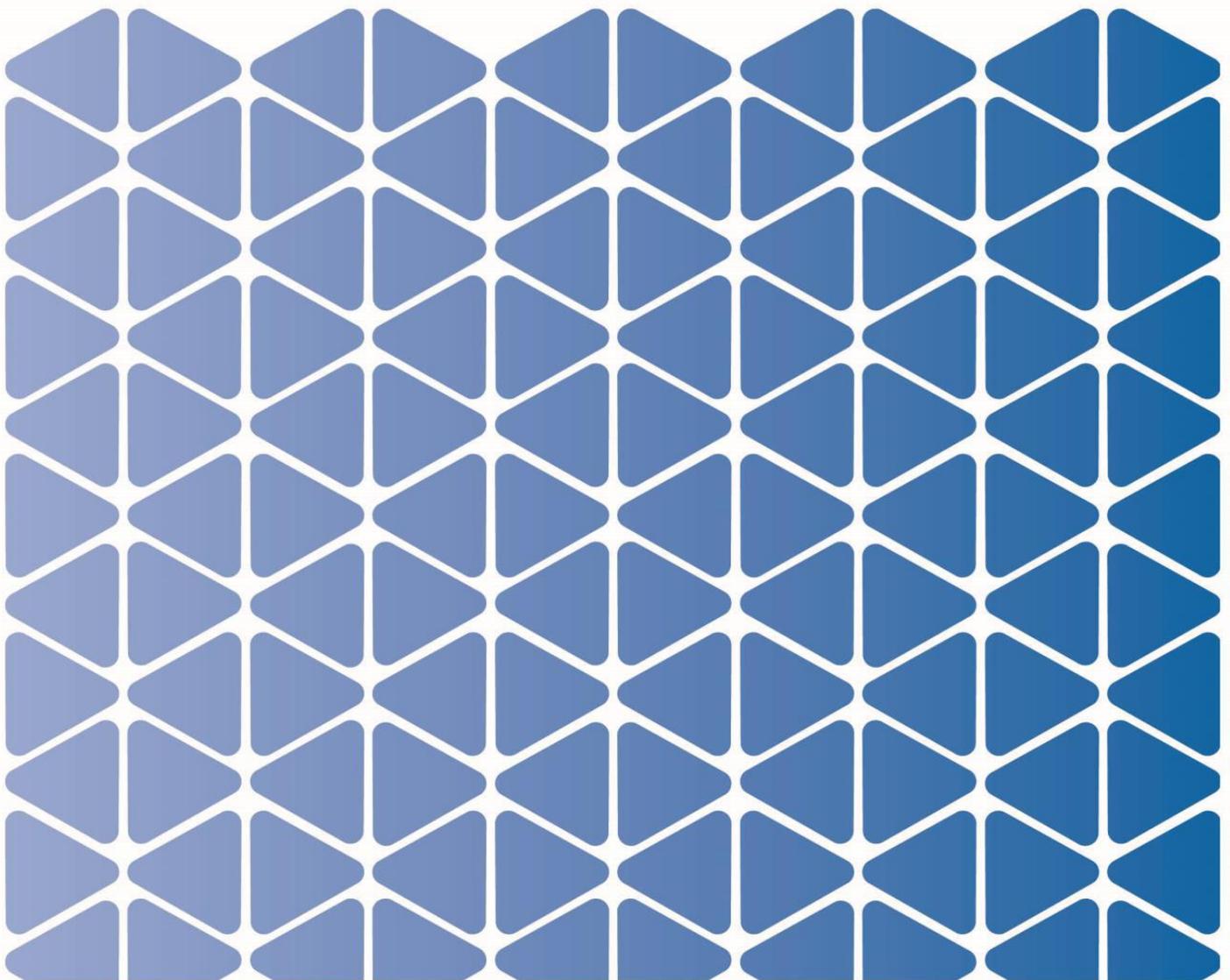


PATIENT INFORMATION

# BEING OPEN AND THE DUTY OF CANDOUR

Communicating patient safety incidents with  
patients, their families and carers



## **Why have I been given this leaflet?**

You have been given this leaflet as an incident has occurred, involving you or your family member, that may have affected the quality of care delivered.

## **What is 'being open'?**

We are committed to delivering safe, high quality care. However, mistakes occasionally happen. Although there are numerous safety checks to ensure that these do not affect patients, sometimes these systems break down and patients may be harmed whilst in our care. Please be assured that this happens very rarely. In the unlikely event that this were to happen to you, we will be open and honest in telling you. We will share our understanding of why it happened and offer you involvement in how we plan to reduce the chances of the same mistake happening again.

A legal **Duty of Candour** reinforces the Being Open principles and means that healthcare providers must ensure that patients, and where appropriate their families, are told openly and honestly when unanticipated errors happen which cause significant harm.

## **Being open involves:**

- Saying sorry, explaining what went wrong and why;
- Investigating why the incident happened and reassuring patients, their families and carers that lessons learnt will help to stop it happening again;
- Involving patients and their carers in the investigation from the outset so that any questions they may have can be addressed as part of the investigation;
- Hospital staff providing support to you and others involved or affected by the incident.

Our staff are encouraged to report all incidents when they believe that there may be lessons to learn. We may contact you at this stage before we know whether there have been any mistakes or gaps in care.

## **Will my comments and suggestions be listened to?**

Yes. Your views on what happened and why, are essential for us to understand and reduce the risk of the same mistake happening again. Please be open with us.

## **What treatment and care will I receive after the incident?**

The Consultant in charge of your care will continue to treat you in accordance with your clinical needs.

You can expect to continue to receive all future treatment with respect, compassion and dignity. However, should you wish to receive treatment from another team or provider, we shall make arrangements for this.

## **What happens if the incident resulted in a patient's death?**

A senior health care professional will meet with the patient's next of kin and ensure that they are informed of the incident. The process would be the same as described above but additionally may involve the coroner's officer.

If this is the case, the coroner's report will provide a key source of information that will help to complete the picture of events leading up to the patient's death.

## **Is support available if I need it?**

Yes. Your named contact will help to identify specific support relevant to your needs.

## **Patients with different languages**

The staff contact will arrange a translator to be available for the Being Open process.

## **What if I want to make a complaint or claim for compensation?**

Being open with you and involving you in understanding what has happened does not affect your right to make a formal complaint or claim for compensation.

Any complaint would be managed by the Trust Complaints Team and your staff contact will continue with the investigation until an outcome has been reached. The outcome of any investigation would be included in the formal response to your written complaint. We would like to reassure you that your complaint will not affect the care and treatment you receive.

If, after the investigation has been completed, you wish to seek compensation, you should seek independent legal advice on your options.

## **Sharing your information**

The Trust handles and shares your information to support your care and according to the law (General Data Protection Regulation 2018). For any further information please refer to the Privacy Notice on the Trusts website.

## **What happens next?**

A senior health care professional will contact you and ensure that you are informed of the incident. If you want your family or other carers to also be involved in this discussion, please let us know. We think it is important that you the patient and your carers are supported in every way possible.

We will provide repeated opportunities for you and/or your family/ carer to obtain information about the incident. We will also provide information in a verbal and / or written format if required.

If our initial investigation finds that there are no concerns about the quality of care, we will let you know that a full investigation does not need to be carried out.

If a full investigation of the incident is required, it is important to note that it can sometimes take weeks or months to investigate an incident fully, so it might be that at the first meeting, no one can tell you exactly what went wrong.

You and your family will be informed if there are any delays in the process. The final investigation findings will be shared with you in person and/or in writing. You have a right to be informed as much or as little as you wish about the conclusions of the investigation.

The person named on this leaflet will meet you at agreed times, or keep in touch via phone or email, to keep you informed on progress, answer any questions you may have and offer any on-going support you require. Please contact them if you have any questions or concerns.

## **Contact details**

Name:.....

Role:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

## **Governance Team Contact details**

Name:.....

Role:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.