



Thames Ambulance Services Limited

Duty of Candour Statement 2019

All staff and volunteers working on behalf of Thames Ambulance Services (TASL) must be open and honest with patients when something goes wrong with their treatment or care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress. This means that our staff must:

- Tell the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) when something has gone wrong;
- Apologise to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family);
- Offer an appropriate remedy or support to put matters right (if possible);
- Explain fully to the patient (or, where applicable, the patient's advocate, carer or family) the short- and long-term effects of what has happened.

TASL staff and volunteers must also be open and honest with their colleagues, employers and relevant organisations, and take part in reviews and investigations when requested. They must also be open and honest with our regulators, raising concerns where appropriate. They must support and encourage each other to be open and honest and not stop someone from raising concerns.

The Duty of Candour is standard across healthcare professions, but it is recognised that different health professions and their regulators work in different ways. TASL will work with commissioners to ensure that standards promoting Candour are appropriate to practice and consistent with other health practices.

TASL works extremely hard to ensure we provide a first-class service to our partners NHS trusts; however, we do understand that on occasion, the service doesn't meet the expectations of our patients. Every concern or complaint is considered as a stepping-stone to providing that service and is therefore given the utmost attention by our Patient Experience Team and overseen by our Quality & Clinical Governance Group.

When referring to patients in this statement, we also mean people who are in our care.

Patient and public feedback comes in various forms and is often an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided. TASL adopts the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 provides the statutory framework for managing complaints, and this is further supported by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's principles of good complaint handling.

Where our service is provided within an NHS Contract, we will comply with the NHS Complaints Policy & Procedures. We will also make provision for sharing and receiving complaints from Commissioners.

Dissatisfaction from a patient or member of the public can be raised orally or in writing. Most complainants will be very clear that they wish their complaint to be treated formally and that they require a written response which explains what happened, why it happened, what we have learnt and what action is being taken to ensure it does not happen again.

Details of how and where to complain can be found below, on the Company's premises, in vehicles and on our website.

How is a complaint made?

We have a strict complaints procedure that enables the complainant to log any issues they have with our service.

By Phone: 0800 164 4696
By Email: pet@thamesgroupuk.com
In writing:
Head of Patient Experience & Legal Claims
TASL
Danwood House
Harrison Place
Whisby Road
Lincoln
LN6 3AH

What is a complaint? What is a concern?

A **complaint** can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction from a patient or member of the public and can be raised orally or in writing. Most complainants will be very clear that they wish their complaint to be treated formally and that they require a written response which explains what happened, why it happened, what we have learnt and what action is being taken to ensure it does not happen again.

A **concern** can be described as negative feedback or to advise/recommend an issue to be addressed, but which has not been or is not required to be dealt with as a formal complaint. It does not necessarily need a written response and can be resolved orally if appropriate. The Patient Experience Team will endeavour to respond within three working days with an outcome, or the Patient Experience Team will give an update.

Time limits to raise a complaint

- 12 months from the date that the event happened, or
- 12 months from the date the complainant became aware of it

The decision to investigate complaints that fall outside of the timeframe is at the discretion of the Executive Board.

What can the complainant expect?

The complainant should expect, within three working days, a staff member of the Patient Experience Team to make contact by telephone, to acknowledge and discuss their concerns. If the complainant has not given a telephone number, a letter of acknowledgement of their complaint will be sent within three working days, which describes the nature of their claim, and the timescale of 25 working days to respond. In the Company's acknowledgement, a leaflet will be enclosed, giving the introduction of PohWer (Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service). This is a free service to anyone, to assist a complainant throughout the complaints process, and explain their rights to take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) if all lines of enquiry are exhausted. PohWer can be contacted by telephone on 0300 200 0084

They should receive a timely response in writing, which addresses the areas of concern raised and an apology where it is required, and appropriate. They will also be kept informed throughout the complaints process and updated where a delay in the investigation has occurred.

Upon receipt of the Company's response, if the complainant remains unhappy, there will be an offer to contact the Company again, to engage a further review or have an LRM. If the complainant does not wish to take this route, the PHSO (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman) contact details will be displayed on the response letter, where the complainant can get in touch them directly.

Confidentiality

All recorded information will be treated as confidential and in accordance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) 2016/679, the Caldicott Guardian Principles and the Access to Health Records Act 1990.

Can a complaint be made to the NHS Trust?

Yes, this can be done through the PALS service at the hospital in question

Approval

This statement has been approved by TASL's CEO on the 11th of June, 2019.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Derek Laird', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Derek Laird
Chief Executive Officer
on behalf of the Board of Executives and Directors
11/06/2019