



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from the NHS you are entitled to make a complaint, have it considered, and receive a response from the NHS organisation or primary care practitioner concerned. The NHS complaints procedure described in this leaflet applies to the NHS in England.

Local Resolution

The NHS complaints procedure covers complaints made by a person about any matter connected with the provision of NHS services by NHS organisation or primary care practitioners (GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacists). The procedure also covers services provided overseas or by the private sector where the NHS has paid for them

Who can complain?

A complaint can be made by a patient or person affected or likely to be affected by the actions or decisions of a NHS organisation or primary care practitioner. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of the patient or person, with their consent.

What is the time limit for making a complaint?

You should normally complain within 6 months of the event(s) concerned or within 6 months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about. Primary care practitioners and complaints managers in NHS organisations have discretion to waive this time limit if there are good reasons why you should not complain earlier.

To whom should I complain initially?

The first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is 'Local Resolution'. Your complaint should be made in the first instance to the organisation or primary care practitioner providing the service. Local resolution aims to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source of the complaint as possible using the most appropriate means; for example, use of conciliation.

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff (e.g. doctor, nurse, dentist, GP or service manager) or someone else. They may be able to resolve your concerns without the need to make a more formal complaint.

However, if you do want to continue with your complaint you can do this by writing (including e-mail) to the primary care practitioner or the NHS organisation concerned within 20 working days. You should be kept informed of progress if this is not going to happen.

NHS Foundation Trusts

NHS Foundation Trusts will have their own systems for the internal handling of complaints, which may differ from the 'local resolution' process described in this leaflet. If you have a complaint about an NHS Foundation Trust, you should contact it for advice on how to make your complaint. The 'independent review' stage carried out by the Healthcare Commission does apply to the NHS Foundation Trusts, which are also covered by the Health Service Ombudsman.

Where can I get further advice and help?

The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) provides advice and support to people who want to complain about the NHS. The local independent advocacy service can be contacted at:

Independent Advocacy

Avenue M

Stoneleigh Park

CV8 2LG

Email: office@independentadvocacy.org

Tel: 024 7669 7443

Fax: 024 7669 6851

The Department of Health's website also has information on the NHS complaints procedure – www.nhs.uk

You could also contact your local citizens advice bureau for further advice and support.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of a NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system meets national criteria.

How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly often at the time they arise and with the person concerned or with the Service Manager or medical director. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible – ideally, within a matter of days or at most a few weeks – because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint.

Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or

Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided that this is within 12 months of the incident.

Complaints should be in writing and addressed to the Service Complaints Manager. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

What we shall do

We shall acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days.

Concerns will be responded to in 30 working days. If this is not possible, for example for more complex concerns, an interim response will be sent within 30 days, and we will keep you updated regularly.

When looking into your complaint, we shall aim to:-

Find out what happened and what went wrong;

Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like to do this;

Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;

Identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have their permission to do so. A note, signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of illness) of providing this.

Complaining to NHS England

We hope that, if you have a problem you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and provide an opportunity to learn from the complaint and improve our practice.

If you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us, alternatively, you may refer it to NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch B97 9PT or telephone number 0300 311 22 33 for further advice.

The Health Service Ombudsman

If you remain unhappy after local resolution and independent review then you can complain to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and government. You can contact the Ombudsman at:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0345 015 4033

e-mail: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

Attached, should you require it, is a Complaints Report Form

