



NHS Complaints - What to do if you are not happy with your care

This leaflet tells you about what to do if you or someone you know is not happy with the care you got from the NHS.

This is called making a complaint.



Complaining

If you are not happy with the care you get from the NHS you have a right to complain and to get an answer. This is called the NHS complaints procedure

There are 2 steps to complaining.

1. Local review

The first step is called the local complaints process

To complain about the care you got you need to write up your complaint.





Your complaint should say -

- Who and what your complaint is about
- Where and when it happened
- What you would like to happen next

You should send your complaint within a year of when the thing you are complaining about happened.

If you were not happy with the care you got at a hospital you should send your complaint to the Chief Executive. This is the person in charge of the hospital.

If you were not happy with the care you got at another health care service you should send it to the person or group that is in charge of the service.

You should get a letter back. The letter should ask you if you want to talk about your complaint.

It should also say how your complaint will be looked into.

You also may be asked to go to a meeting.

After your complaint has been looked into they should send you a letter saying what has been done.



2. Independent review

For the next step of complaining you should complain to the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman.

Your complaint should say –

- Who and what your complaint is about
- Where and when it happened
- What has happened so far with your complaint
- Why you are still not happy
- Why you think that the first step of complaining did not deal with the problem

This complaint also needs to be sent within a year of what you are complaining about happening.

You will be told who your contact person is. This person will let you know what is happening with your complaint.

The Ombudsman does not deal with all the complaints that it gets.

If the Ombudsman decides to deal with the complaint then it will try to get an apology for you.



The Ombudsman might look into changing how the NHS works so that it doesn't happen again.

Who else to contact if you are not happy with your care

If you are not happy and you want to complain there are different groups you could also get in contact with who can help you.

These groups are there to make sure health services work properly.

General Medical Council

The General Medical Council is the group in charge of doctors.

They keep a list of all the doctors in the UK.

They make sure that doctors are trained well and are doing their jobs well.

If you are not happy with the care you got from a doctor and you think they may harm other patients you should contact the General Medical Council.



Nursing and Midwifery Council

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is the group in charge of nurses and midwives in the UK.

They make sure that nurses and midwives are trained well.

If you are not happy with the care you got from a nurse or midwife and you think they may harm other patients you should contact the Nursing and Midwifery Council.



Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission is in charge of checking all the hospitals, dentists, ambulances and care homes in England.

They make sure that all these services are clean and safe and that the people they are caring for are being treated well.

The Care Quality Commission carry out checks to make sure that the services are being run well.



If you go to the Care Quality Commission website you can check to see if your local services are being run well.

Monitor

Monitor is the group in charge of making sure that health care services are run well

They make sure the people who used the services are given the best possible care.

They are in charge of NHS foundation trusts.



Healthwatch

Healthwatch speaks up for NHS patients and helps them to make choices about their services. It also supports patients if they make a complaint.

If you are not happy with the care you got from a NHS service you should contact Healthwatch to get advice.





Health and Wellbeing boards

Local authorities run Health and Wellbeing boards. They are in charge of making sure that local services are being run well.

They also check the health of local people.

If you are not happy with the care you got from health services in your area you should contact the Health and Wellbeing board.

More Information

If you would like more information please contact the campaigns and policy team at Mencap.

You can call us on 020 7696 6952

or email campaigns@mencap.org.uk

or write to Mencap, 123 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0RT