

NHS complaints and raising concerns



If you're not happy with the care or treatment you've received or you've been refused treatment for a condition, you have the right to complain, have your complaint investigated, and be given a full and prompt reply.

Step 1

If you are concerned

It is always better to try to get your concerns resolved by raising them with a member of NHS staff. GP practices, pharmacists, opticians and most dental surgeries have a practice manager – ask the receptionist for an appointment. Often things can be put right this way.

If you would like to discuss the problem with someone else, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS can speak to the service you are unhappy about and try to put things right. Contact details for PALS are provided below.

Step 2

Making a formal complaint

If you have tried the things above but are still not happy, you can make a formal complaint. You can do this in person, by letter, telephone or email.

You should do this as soon as you can, ideally within one year of deciding you are unhappy. If you have been too ill to complain within one year, you can still talk to the NHS service concerned. They might decide that they can still look at your complaint.

If you need support with making a formal complaint, the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (contact details below) will be able to help you. The advocate can help you write a complaint letter and understand the options you have and can attend meetings with you.

Who to complain to?

About a doctor, dentist, pharmacist or optician

If you would like to complain about any of these people you should ask member of staff for the complaints procedure or contact the Practice Manager. If your issue can't be resolved locally with the Practice Manager, you should contact NHS England.

About hospital and other health services

If you decide to make a complaint about these, you should contact your local service, for instance the hospital, and ask to speak to the Complaints Department.

If you are not sure who to complain to, ask a member of NHS staff, PALS or Healthwatch.

Step 3

If you aren't happy with the outcome

If you are still not happy with the way the NHS organisation has dealt with your complaint you have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to investigate your complaint. To find out more about the procedure see:

www.ombudsman.org.uk

Please remember that making a complaint will not affect how you are treated. Complaints letters and records are not filed in your healthcare records.

However, your complaint may highlight shortcomings, which can be put right, so improving things for other patients

Useful tips

- Write down what you are unhappy about.
- Think about what action you would like to happen or result you would like to see.
- Ask your GP practice, hospital etc. for a copy of its complaints procedure.
- Keep a record of any telephone calls you make or letters you write or receive about your complaint.
- Keep copies of any material or letters that you send and use recorded delivery if possible.
- If you are asked to go to a meeting, you might want to write down the questions you want to ask before you go. This will make it easier to say all the things you want to say. You can also take a friend or advocate with you.
- If your complaint concerns more than one NHS organisation, you only need to send a letter to one of them; they will talk to each other and provide a response.

Useful contacts

Healthwatch can provide information and signposting about local health and social care services: 01273 234040 (Mon-Fri) or email: office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

For free, independent complaints advocacy about health matters:

Tel: 0300 456 2370

E: powher@powher.net

Minicom: 0300 456 2364

Post: PO Box 14043, B6 9BL

NHS England

PO Box 16738. Redditch. B97 9PT.

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net.

Tel: 0300 311 22 33.

Opening hours are: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday,
9.30am to 6pm on Wednesdays.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

To complain about the NHS in England you can:

Visit '[Making a complaint page](#)'

Tel: 0345 015 4033

Opening hours are 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 8:30am to midday Fridays

Click [here](#) for accessible versions of this website

Contact list for Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

Hospital issues:

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals

Tel: 01273 664511 or 664973.

Princess Royal Hospital – Tel 01444 448678

Email: bsuh.pals@nhs.net

Click this [leaflet](#) for more info

Issues about health professionals working within the community, from health visitors looking after newborn babies to practitioners caring for the frail and elderly:
Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (Service Experience Team). Tel: 01273 242292
Email: sc-tr.PALS@nhs.net
Click this [leaflet](#) for more info

Issues about mental health, substance misuse, learning disability and prison healthcare services:

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 0300 304 2198

Email: pals@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk

For more information visit their website:

www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/complaints-and-views

Issues about emergency and non-emergency patient transport services and the 111 service:

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 0300 1239 242

Email: pet.secamb@nhs.net

Text/SMS only - 07824 625370

