

COMPLAIN FOR **CHANGE**.

Tips on

making a complaint to
the NHS in England



Complaining can
make things better.



Parliamentary
and Health Service
Ombudsman

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when you tell an organisation that:

- **you are not happy** with their service or something they did or didn't do
- **you want an answer** from them or for them to put it right.

If you are unhappy with the NHS treatment you or a family member or someone you care for has received, you can complain.

We are the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the final stage in the complaints process after you have complained to the NHS. Before bringing a complaint about the NHS to us, you have to complain to the NHS organisation you are unhappy with (for example your GP or hospital).

We have listed some tips in this leaflet to help guide you through making a complaint to the NHS in England.

Top ten tips



1 What is your complaint about?

Work out what you want to say and be clear about:

- What happened
- Who was involved
- When
- Where
- Why you weren't happy.



2 Decide what you want to achieve.

Be prepared to tell the NHS organisation what you would like them to do to put things right. This could be an apology or preventing the same mistake happening again.

Complain
as soon as
you can





Keep to the point

3 Complain as soon as you can.

If you can speak to the people involved first, they may be able to sort out your problem quickly.

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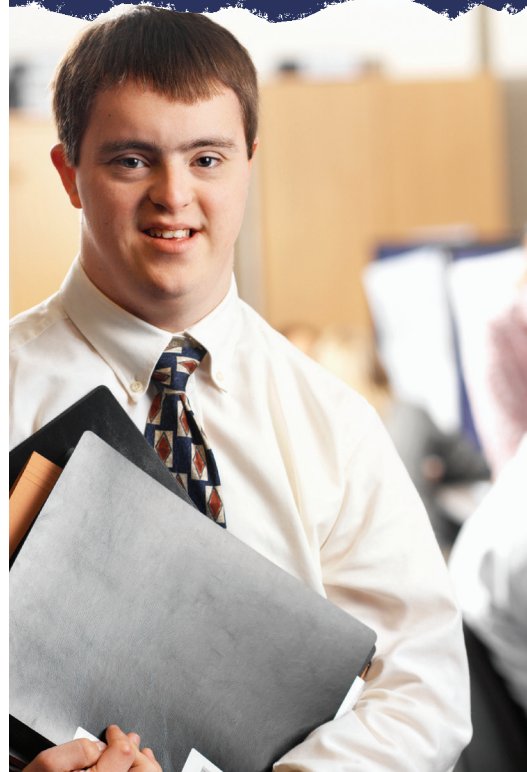
4 Contact the NHS organisation you want to complain about.

If you're not sure how to do this, your local Healthwatch can help.

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5 Ask about the organisation's complaints procedure.

You may need to complain verbally or in writing. Ask if there is a form to fill in and when you can expect to hear back from them.



6 Ask for help.

If you struggle with reading or writing, NHS Complaints Advocacy or your local Healthwatch can help.

7 Keep your complaint clear and short so your main points stand out.

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8 Include your address and a reference number if you have one.

Also include the date of anything that happened which is important to your complaint.

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9 Write down people's names and positions.

Also keep copies of any letters or emails you get, as you may need to refer to them in the future.

10 Contact us.

If you have reached the end of the complaints process and are still not happy, or if your complaint hasn't been sorted out after six months, you can complain to us.

You should normally refer your complaint to us within 12 months of becoming aware of the problem.



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For more information on NHS Complaints Advocacy, visit:

www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org

To find your local Healthwatch, visit:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/find-local-healthwatch

To complain to us visit:

www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint

or call 0345 015 4033.

Complain for change:

www.ombudsman.org.uk/complainforchange

For other languages or formats please contact us: publications@ombudsman.org.uk