



This document is a guide to help you raise concerns yourself.

Raising concerns and or making a complaint can be quite daunting but by raising a concern NHS services can be improved.



Identify the Problem

What are you complaining about?

From the beginning of the process you need to be 100% clear about what the issues are that you are complaining about. Write them down and keep them clear and concise. This will help you when writing letters and sitting in meetings explaining your concerns. It will also help the NHS organisations to deal with your complaints correctly.

What do you want to come from the process?

- An apology
- An explanation
- Improvement of services
- Financial compensation



Raising concerns

Sometimes the solution to a problem can be quite simple. Talk to the service involved. Give them a chance to deal with your issue and find a solution for you. Ask for a copy of their complaints procedure. This will give you further guidance with your complaint and will give you the details of the person/persons to complain to. If this does not resolve your issue or you are not comfortable going directly to the service then in the case of Primary Care or independent providers for example GP's, dentists & pharmacy speak to NHS England. In the case of secondary services for example hospitals, mental health services and patient transport talk to their Patients and Liaison Service (PALS). They will be able to help you with your issue and give you advice on the necessary steps to be taken to get the issue resolved.

NHS England: Telephone: 0300 311 22 33 or Email england.contactus@nhs.net include "For the attention of the complaint team" in the subject line.

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust PALS: Drop-in Service open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 3.00pm near the main reception area in Queen Alexandra Hospital. Freephone 0800 917 6039 Telephone: 02392 286309 or Email PHT.PALS@porthosp.nhs.uk

Solent NHS Trust PALS: Freephone 0800 013 2319 or Email snhs.solentfeedback@nhs.net

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust patient experience team: Telephone 0300 123 9280 or Email patientexperience@scas.nhs.uk

Making a Complaint

This is your chance to explain what you are unhappy with and to indicate what you would like the outcome to be. You can make your complaint:

1. By letter or email
2. In person or
3. By phone.

Writing a letter or email where possible is likely to be the best way to make your complaint. It will be easier to keep records of your correspondence. A letter or email will give you a chance to clearly state what your concerns are and what you would want to see at the end of the process. Although writing a letter or email may be the best way to make your original complaint, you may not be able to. If you make your complaint in person or by phone the person recording your complaint will send you a written copy of your complaint. If you need assistance in writing a complaints letter, the Advocate at Healthwatch Portsmouth may be available to support you with this.

By law complaints should be made within 12 months of the event or immediately after discovering you have something to complain about.

Who to complain to?

Complaints about:

- Primary care and independent providers such as GP; Pharmacists; Health Centres; Dentist; Opticians.
 1. Complain directly to that service following their complaints policy which should be available.
 2. If you do not feel comfortable dealing directly with the service provider, then you can make your complaint to NHS England:

By post to: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT

By email to: england.contactus@nhs.net include “For the attention of the complaint team” in the subject line.

By telephone: 0300 311 22 33

- Complaints about care received in hospital.
 1. Complain directly to that service. Each department or ward will have a manager that will deal with your complaint directly.
 2. If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with or if you do not feel comfortable dealing directly with the service provider, then you can make your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of the relevant NHS Trust as follows:

The Chief Executive, **Portsmouth NHS Trust Headquarters**, Queen Alexandra Hospital, Southwick Hill Road, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 3LY

Chief Executive, **Solent NHS Trust**, Highpoint Venue, Bursledon Road, Southampton, SO19 8BR

Chief Executive, **South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust**, North Wing, Southern House, Sparrowgrove, Otterbourne, Hampshire, SO21 2RU

What next?

- You should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within three working days.
- In the acknowledgment you will receive contact details of the person dealing with your case, so that you can contact them whenever you need to discuss the case or any concerns you have.
- There will be an investigation into your complaint. That should take around 28 working days. If this is not the case you will be informed.

During the investigation:

- The person involved in your case should explain the complaints procedure to you and keep you informed throughout the process.
- It may be necessary to have a meeting to discuss your complaint. This is known as a Local Resolution Meeting (LRM). You may take someone to support you during any meetings. This could be a relative, a friend or an advocate. If you would like the support of an advocate, you can contact Healthwatch Portsmouth to see if an advocate can accompany you to your meeting.
- Write down the points that you want discussed and explained during the meeting. Remember that only details contained in the original complaint can be discussed at the LRM.

After the investigation

Once the investigation is completed you will receive a letter containing:

- A summary of the complaint
- The findings of the investigation.
- An apology if required.
- An outline of the action to be taken by the NHS service.
- A timescale for the actions to be put into place.
- Instructions on what to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

The letter should be clear and easily understood with explanations of technical terms if they are used.

Not happy with the outcome?

If you are not happy with the outcome of the local resolution you can:

1. Call the person handling your complaint and voice your concerns.
2. You can ask for another meeting to discuss your concerns that you feel were not dealt with.

The NHS organisation may choose to investigate your concerns further. At this point they will discuss a way forward and agree timescales with you. If the NHS organisation feels that they have done everything they can do to resolve your issue, they will inform you in writing. This would signal the end of the Local Resolution Process. If you are not happy with the way the NHS organisation has dealt with your complaint and you have written confirmation from them of the end of the Local Resolution Process you have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to investigate your complaint.

By post to: Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

By email to: phso@enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

By telephone: 0345 015 4033

Via their website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

Who are the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman?

- The PHSO is a free and independent service.
- The PHSO will look at every complaint that they receive but
- The PHSO will not investigate every complaint they receive.

Reason for not investigating:

- If the complaint has not been through the Local Resolution Process.
- If the PHSO feels that the NHS organisation has done everything possible to address your complaint and put things right.
- Just because you disagree with the outcome of the Local Resolution Process. There needs to be evidence to prove that your complaint has not been dealt with correctly, such as inaccuracies, missing information or evidence the complaint has been misunderstood.

If the PHSO decides not to investigate your case you will be informed.

If the PHSO decides to investigate the case there will be a named investigator who will conduct a thorough investigation with a detailed report. In the report, the PHSO may make recommendations to the NHS organisation to put things right. The investigation can be time consuming but the PHSO aims to complete their investigation within 12 months.

Please contact us at Healthwatch Portsmouth

- If you have any queries and need some advice.
- If you need help drafting letters
- If you want an advocate to accompany you to any local resolution meetings.
- If you feel that you would like support with the complaints process.

Healthwatch Portsmouth
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Email: info@healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk