What to do if you’re unhappy with the NHS
Three steps to getting things put right

If you’re unhappy with the service a hospital, GP or dental practice or another NHS organisation in England have given you, there are three steps you can take.

1. Make a complaint to the NHS organisation as soon as you can. Complaining to them directly might get the matter resolved quickly. Explain why you’re unhappy and how you want them to put things right.

   If you would like help with making a complaint, you can ask your local Healthwatch to put you in touch with the NHS complaints advocacy provider for your area. For details of your local Healthwatch, see www.healthwatch.co.uk or call Healthwatch England on 03000 683 000.

2. Give the NHS a chance to resolve your complaint and give you their final response. Make sure you keep copies of all letters about your complaint.

3. If you’re unhappy with how the NHS have dealt with your complaint, contact the Health Service Ombudsman. See back page for details.
How the Health Service Ombudsman can help

We help resolve complaints about the NHS. Our service is free. We’re independent, not part of the NHS or Government, and our powers are set down in law.

We will usually only investigate a complaint after the NHS have had a chance to try to sort it out.

By law, you should usually come to us within a year of when you first became aware of the problem. If it was more than a year ago, we may still be able to help you, if there were good reasons for the delay.

If we decide the NHS have got things wrong, we can tell them how to put things right. This could mean apologising to you, giving you a better explanation of their actions or taking other steps to resolve your complaint and put things right.
Here to help

To find out more about how we can help, please get in touch. We’re open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Remember that you need to complain to the NHS organisation you’re unhappy with first.

Visit www.ombudsman.org.uk

Call 0345 015 4033
You can contact us from a textphone on 0300 061 4298 if you are deaf or have problems using a standard telephone

Email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Text ‘call back’ with your name and mobile number to 07624 813 005 and we will call you back

Fax 0300 061 4000

Write to Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

This leaflet is available in other formats and languages. For more details, please contact us.

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