

NHS Complaint Standards

Spring 2021 Update



Parliamentary
and Health Service
Ombudsman

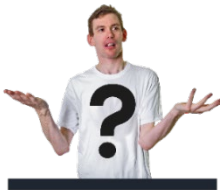


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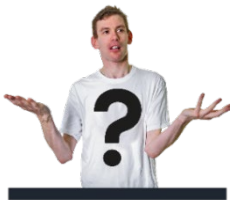
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The Complaint Standards



Introduction



The **NHS Complaint Standards** explain what **NHS organisations** should do when they get a complaint.



The **NHS Complaint Standards** means:

- it is easier for people to make a complaint



- it is easier to sort out problems



- any **NHS** worker:
 - should be able to go on good training courses about sorting out complaints
 - should try to sort out problems when they first hear about them





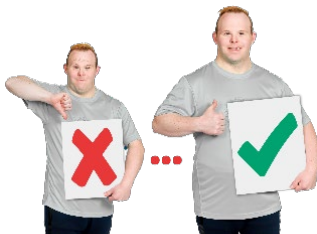
- **NHS** leaders must:



- keep checking on all complaints



- learn from all complaints



- use what they learn to make services better.



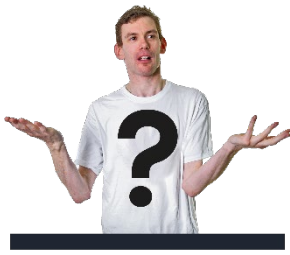
The details in this document are based on a big project held in **2013** and **2014**.



In the project lots of people who use **NHS services** were asked how they wanted to feel when they made a complaint.



So the **NHS Complaint Standards** explains how **NHS workers** can run a complaints service that people would like.



What do these words mean?



In all documents about the **NHS Complaint Standards** we use these words.

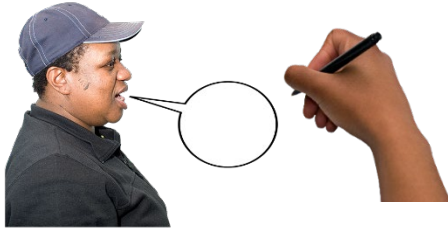


Feedback is a comment that can be good, bad or both.



A complaint:

- can be about anything
- is made when someone is not happy with a service



- can be spoken or written down



Anyone who manages **complaints** or **feedback** should know that all types of issues are taken seriously.



An **NHS organisation** must reply to a complaint.



Staff

All **NHS workers** who work with patients or members of the public.



Leaders

All the people who lead **NHS** organisations:



must have an interest in **feedback** and **complaints**



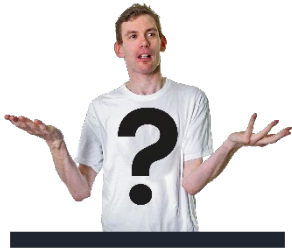
Complaints staff

All the people who manage complaints.



NHS organisations

Any organisation that provides care or treatment for the **NHS**.



Why have NHS Complaint Standards?



All **NHS organisations** should:

- learn from the complaints they get



- work out the best way to learn.



When there is a good complaints service **NHS workers** and people who use **NHS services** work well together.



People who use **NHS services**:

- should know how to give **feedback**



- should know how to make a **complaint**



- should know how to get **support** to complain when they need to



- should know that any **worries** they have are taken seriously and will get sorted out.



Every time someone complains about **NHS services**:



- they should feel like they did the right thing



The **NHS** complaints service must be the same for everyone.

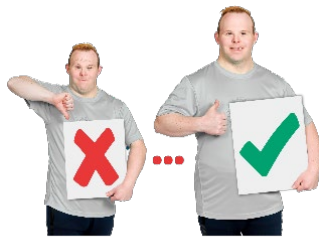


Staff who have been complained about:

- should be able to **comment** on the complaint



- should get **support** from the **NHS** or another organisation.



How do NHS Complaint Standards make services better?



NHS Complaint Standards means everyone knows what will happen when they make a **complaint** this includes:



- staff
- patients
- carers.



This will mean:

- the **NHS complaints service** is the same for everyone



- dealing with complaints is an important skill for all **NHS workers**



- **NHS organisations** will learn more from **feedback** and **complaints** to make services better



- more complaints will be sorted out **quickly**



- anyone who complains will **get an answer** as quickly as possible.



Getting complaints sorted out quickly



NHS Complaint Standards will mean:



- patients can be open about their problems



- **NHS organisations** are more open when things go wrong



- **NHS organisations** and the public will talk to each other more



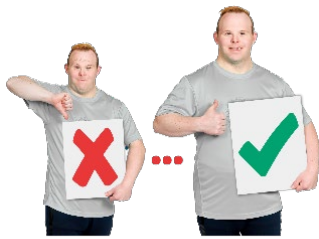
- **NHS** organisations will find out more from patients about how they feel.



When there is **more training** and **more guides** for **NHS workers** who deal with complaints



then more **NHS organisations** sort out complaints in the same way.



When this happens there will be:

- a **better complaints service**



- **better reporting**



- **better learning.**



Other important standards



The **NHS Complaint Standards** will help **NHS** workers to follow other **NHS** rules.



NHS Complaint Regulations



The **NHS Complaint Standards** supports the **NHS Complaint Regulations** and other rules about dealing with complaints.



NHS Constitution



The **NHS Constitution** is an important legal document that lists the rights of different groups:

- patients
- the public
- **NHS** workers.



The **NHS Complaint Standards** supports **NHS** workers to follow the rules about complaints in the **NHS Constitution**.



Ask Listen Do



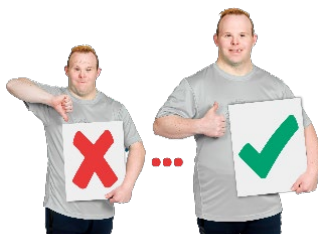
The **NHS Complaint Standards** supports **Ask Listen Do** because it will:



- make it easier for children, young people and adults with a learning disability and autistic people to use the **NHS complaints service**.



- make it easier for **families** and **paid carers** to complain.



- make sure **NHS organisations** make services better for people with a learning disability and autistic people.



Duty of Candour



The **NHS Complaint Standards** supports an important document called the **Duty of Candour** which makes sure:



- **NHS organisations** are open when patients get hurt or could have been hurt



- **NHS organisations** are open and say 'sorry' when they make a mistake.



What is a good complaints service?

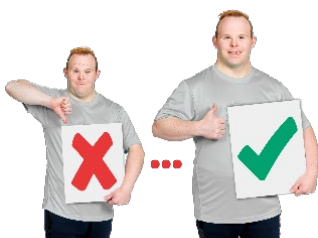


To run a **good** complaints service there are **4 things** **NHS organisations** must do:



1. Welcome complaints

NHS organisations must welcome complaints by:



- viewing complaints as an important way to **make services better**.
- making it **easy** for people to complain.





- giving **NHS workers** the power to sort out complaints **as quickly as possible**.



2. Look at the details and be fair



NHS organisations must:

- look into complaints carefully



- give an honest answer to a complaint as soon as they can



- make sure **people who complain** and **NHS workers** have their say and get updates when they need them.



- make sure everyone knows that **NHS workers** who sort out complaints are **fair** and only look at the **facts**.



3. Give fair and open answers



NHS organisations must:

- look into what happened and find out **if they did something wrong**



- make sure all reports on complaints talk about what **everyone thinks** about the complaint.



- make sure **NHS workers** can make a **fair decision** to sort out the problem



4. Learn from complaints



NHS organisations must:

- make sure **NHS workers** understand how complaints:

- help to make services better



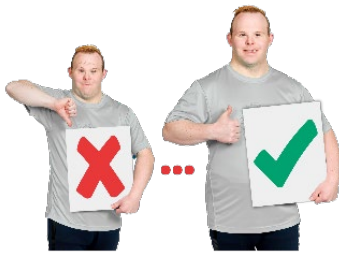
- help them to **get better** in their jobs.



- work out the best way to **learn from complaints**



- talk to **leaders** and the public about what it learns from complaints



- make sure what the **NHS** learns helps to make services better



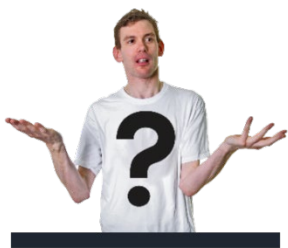
- make sure **NHS workers** get **support** and **training** to offer the best complaints service



- make it easy for people to give **feedback** or make a **complaint**.



- make sure **NHS** workers **ask** for feedback.



What should it look like
when someone who
complains?



Step 1
I am thinking about making
a complaint



I was happy to **speak up**



- I **knew** I had the **right to complain**



- I was told **how to complain**



- I **knew** I would get **support** to make a complaint



- I **knew** my care would carry on if I made a complaint.



Step 2 Making a complaint



I thought it was **easy** to make a complaint



- I knew I could tell any **NHS worker** about my complaint



- I **got support** to make my complaint

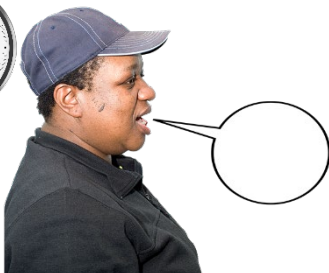


Complain

- I could **tell** the **NHS** about my complaint in the way I wanted



- My complaint was **taken seriously** the first time I told the **NHS** about it



- I made my complaint **when** I wanted to



Step 3

Keeping in touch



I thought **NHS workers** listened to me and understood me.



- I always knew **what was happening** about my complaint



- I thought the answers I got showed that the **NHS** had **looked into my problem**



- I could choose if my complaint was kept **private and confidential**



- I knew the **NHS worker** dealing with my complaint could **sort out my problems**.



Step 4 Getting the result



I thought my complaint **made a difference**.



- I got an answer to my complaint in **good time**



- I got an answer to my complaint in **the right way**



- The reply to my complaint looked at **all my problems**



- **The way I felt** about the complaint was in the final reply.



Step 5

How did I feel after making a complaint?



I feel happy about **making another complaint.**



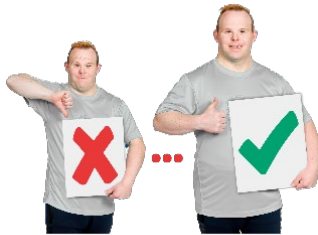
- I would **complain again** if I needed to



- I thought my complaint was managed **fairly**



- I would **tell others** to complain if they needed to



- I know how **complaints** can help to **make services better**.



For more information



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