

CEO, AJM Healthcare

Sent by email: enquiries@ajmhealthcare.org



9 May 2024

Dear CEO

I am writing to you to raise my concerns about an increase in complaints the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has received about AJM Healthcare.

PHSO independently investigate complaints about UK Government departments and the NHS in England. As the UK National Ombudsman, we champion higher standards of behaviour to encourage a better relationship between people and public services, and we investigate complaints from people who feel these standards have not been met.

My hope in bringing these issues to your attention is that you will take the time to investigate the cause of this increase and make any necessary changes to address your customers' concerns and improve the service you provide.

Complaints are an important part of the relationship between people and public services. They provide vital feedback to an organisation which can then be used to improve its services.

Since 2018, the Ombudsman has received 67 complaints about your organisation. Over half of those (38) were made in 2023, and 12 have been made already this year. Most of the complaints related to people not receiving new wheelchairs or the correct parts. We have also received complaints about delays in receiving wheelchairs and parts, and poor communication. This includes a failure to respond to complaints. In one case, a customer was unable to make a complaint as the complaints team and head office said that they could not investigate the issue.

I know you will be concerned about the nature and number of complaints, particularly the sharp rise in 2023, and the issues raised around complaint handling. We have been unable to look into these complaints as the majority were made before people had completed AJM's own complaints process. Our legislation expects complaints to have been considered by the service provider before we can investigate. For this reason, we are restricted in the recommendations we can make for service improvements.



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All service providers need to listen to complaints. In your case, this is particularly important given (as of course you are aware) that your equipment is vital for those with a disability, who face multiple barriers, to be able to access services and lead their daily lives.

Your ability to support your customer community is hampered unless you listen to complaints, respond in a timely fashion, and act on the learning they generate. The number of complaints we have received about your organisation suggests this is not happening.

Our recommendation is that you review how your organisation handles complaints and uses the learning from these complaints to rectify any issues in this area.

We recently updated our [NHS Complaint Standards](#) which sets out how organisations delivering NHS services should approach complaint handling. The guidance helps make sure people can resolve their concerns with the organisation as quickly and efficiently as possible. The guidance also helps staff to provide a quicker, simpler, and more streamlined complaint handling service.

Our Stakeholder Engagement Team would be happy to speak with your complaints manager about the training we offer organisations on how to put the NHS Complaint Standards into practice. Please contact the team if this would be of interest to you:

Liaisonmanagers@ombudsman.org.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you by 6 June to inform me of the steps you will take to review this increase in complaints, your complaints processes, and the support you offer to your customers.

Yours Sincerely



Rebecca Hilsenrath
Ombudsman and Chair
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

