

# Taking a complaint to the Ombudsman

FACTSHEET #5

## You can take your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) if you do not think that Local Resolution has addressed your complaint properly.

The Ombudsman is independent of the NHS, confidential and free.

You have one year from the events you are complaining about to contact the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman does have the discretion to extend this time limit in exceptional circumstances.

### Accepting your complaint

Be aware that the Ombudsman do not (and do not have to) investigate all the complaints that are referred to them. They will not usually investigate a complaint if:

- Try to keep your complaint to no more than two pages
- The complaint has not been through Stage 1 – Local resolution (see Factsheet #4). The Ombudsman can refer a formal complaint back to the Local Resolution stage if they think that you have come to the Ombudsman too soon. They may also refer a complaint back to Local Resolution if they feel that the NHS service has not done all it can to resolve your issues. If you disagree with a decision made by your NHS service but cannot offer any evidence as to why their decision is wrong or unsatisfactory.
- They feel that the NHS service has done all that is reasonably possible to put things right.

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## The Process

- Firstly, a member of the Ombudsman's staff will consider whether your case meets the Ombudsman's criteria for investigation.
- If it meets the criteria, the Ombudsman will take a closer look at the complaint and decide if they should investigate.
- If the Ombudsman investigates they will write a detailed report about the case.
- If the Ombudsman upholds your complaint, they can make recommendations to the NHS provider or practitioner to put things right.
- The Ombudsman's decision about your complaint is final. This includes their decision whether or not to investigate your complaint. It also includes their decision whether or not to uphold your complaint following an investigation.

More information about the PHSO can be found here:  
[www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).



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