

Local Resolution

FACTSHEET #3

Local Resolution is where you aim to sort out your concern directly with the NHS organisation. This is your opportunity to explain what you are unhappy about and what you would like to happen.

What do you want to achieve?

The outcomes from Local Resolution can include:

- an explanation regarding what happened,
- an apology
- a review of procedures to help avoid a repeat of what happened.

The NHS complaints procedure is unlikely to result in compensation. You are not likely to be told about any actions taken about the staff you have complained about.

How do you begin to submit a formal complaint?

Explain what happened to you either in person, on the telephone, by email, or in a letter. NHS services prefer to receive formal complaints in writing. (See Factsheet #4 Writing a Complaint Letter).

Make it clear that you are submitting a formal complaint.

Who should I complain to?

- If your complaint is about an NHS hospital or NHS ambulance service, you should contact the appropriate Complaints Manager or the Chief Executive of the NHS Service or Trust.
- If your complaint is about an NHS primary care service (for example a GP, dentist, optician, pharmacist, health centre etc.), you can complain directly to them. You would need to contact the person in charge of complaints. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, you can complain directly to NHS England.
- If your complaint concerns more than one NHS service, you can request a coordinated response. This means you only need to send a letter to one service or organisation. They will liaise with the other organisation(s) involved and provide a coordinated response. Alternatively, you have the option to raise your concerns directly with all the individual NHS services or organisations involved.

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What will happen next?

The NHS service should acknowledge your complaint either verbally or in writing within three working days. The NHS service should agree with you a timescale for resolving the issues and how they will keep you informed of progress. If there is a problem in keeping to the agreed timescale they should contact you.

Resolving your complaint

The NHS service will usually respond via letter. You may be offered a complaint meeting so that you can speak to staff directly about what has happened. If you wish, you can take a friend, relative and/or Advocate with you.

It is helpful to prepare a list of questions that you want to ask and then use that list at the meeting to ensure you have covered all your questions. It is also helpful to take all related letters and paperwork with you to the meeting.

After the Investigation

Once the investigation is finished, and any meetings have been held, the Complaints Manager should send you a letter. The letter should contain a summary of your complaint, what the investigation found and any actions that are taken as a result. They will also tell you what to do if you are still unhappy with the answers given.

What if I am not happy at the end of Local Resolution?

If you are not satisfied with the NHS reply, ask yourself exactly what you are still unhappy about so you can decide what you wish to do next. You could write another letter explaining what you think has not been covered. You could telephone the person handling your complaint and explain why you are still unhappy. You could request a meeting to further review and discuss your outstanding concerns.

The NHS service may feel that everything has been done to fully answer your complaint and if so, they should tell you this in a final response letter.

If you are not happy with the responses that you have received at this point, you can take your complaint further. This would mean raising your complaint with The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) (see factsheet #5)

At this stage, the Local Resolution process will be concluded.



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