

## Local Resolution

**Local Resolution is the stage where you aim to resolve your concerns directly with the NHS organisation involved. This is your opportunity to clearly explain what went wrong from your point of view and what outcome you are hoping for.**

### Possible outcomes from Local Resolution include:

- A clear explanation of what happened
- An apology
- A review of policies or procedures to help prevent the issue from happening again

The NHS complaints procedure rarely results in financial compensation, and you are unlikely to be informed about any internal action taken regarding staff.

### How do you begin to submit a formal complaint?

Explain what happened to you – this can be done in person, over the phone, by email, or in a letter.

NHS services generally prefer complaints to be made in writing (see Factsheet #4: Writing a Complaint Letter).

Be sure to state clearly that you are making a **formal complaint**.

### Who should I complain to?

- If your complaint is about an **NHS hospital or ambulance service**:

Send your complaint to the Complaints Manager or the Chief Executive of the relevant NHS Trust or service.

- If your complaint is about an **NHS primary care service** (such as a GP, dentist, optician, pharmacist, or health centre):

You can submit your complaint directly to the practice or service. Ask for the person responsible for handling complaints.

If you do not feel comfortable doing this, you may send your complaint directly to the ICB instead.

- If your complaint **involves more than one NHS service**:

You can request a coordinated response. This means you only need to write to one of the organisations involved, and they will work with the other services to provide a joint reply.

Alternatively, you can contact each service individually if you prefer.



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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 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 have been 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's response, try to identify exactly what is still concerning you so you can decide your next steps.

You may choose to write again, explaining which issues you feel have not been addressed. Alternatively, you can telephone the person handling your complaint to discuss why you remain unhappy, or you can request a meeting to review the unresolved points.

The NHS service may decide that they have fully answered your complaint. If so, they should inform you of this in a final response letter.

If, after receiving this final response, you still feel your concerns have not been resolved, you can ask for a review of your complaint by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) (see Factsheet #5).



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