

# Taking a complaint to the Ombudsman

**You can refer your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) if you believe that Local Resolution has not properly addressed all your concerns.**

## Contacting the Ombudsman

The PHSO is independent of the NHS. Its service is free and confidential for anyone raising a complaint.

If you decide to contact the PHSO, it's best to do so as soon as possible after receiving the final response from the NHS complaint process. For complaints about NHS care in England, the normal time limit is **within 12 months** of when you became aware of the problem.

The PHSO can sometimes make exceptions where there is good reason for a delay, but this is not guaranteed.

## When the Ombudsman may accept – and when they might not

The PHSO will review whether a complaint meets its criteria before deciding whether to investigate. They may decide not to investigate if, for example:

- You have not first submitted your complaint through the local complaints process – the Ombudsman expects that the organisation has had a chance to address your concerns first.
- The organisation has already done everything reasonably possible to resolve the complaint.
- You disagree with the organisation's decision but have no evidence to show why their response is wrong or unsatisfactory.

## What happens if the Ombudsman investigates?

First, a member of the PHSO staff assesses whether your complaint meets their criteria.



If it does, they take a closer look and decide whether to open a full investigation.



If the investigation goes ahead, the PHSO writes a detailed report into your case.



If your complaint is upheld, the Ombudsman can make recommendations to the relevant NHS service or practitioner to remedy the issue – for example, an apology, a change to procedures, or other corrective action.

The PHSO's decision – whether they decide not to investigate, or investigate and then uphold or reject your complaint – is final.

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



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