



Help and advice on complaining

There is a useful section contained on the Care Quality Commission website about complaining about services

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/contactus/howtoraiseaconcernorcomplaint.cfm>

Complaining about the NHS

- The local Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) can advise on how to take your complaint forward or help you to resolve it informally.
- [The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service \(ICAS\)](#) is a free, confidential and independent service which can help you make a formal complaint about NHS services.
- [NHS Direct](#) can provide free health advice and information.
- [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) can offer can advice on NHS complaints

Complaining about a care home/service or independent healthcare

- The first step is to tell the **care service or healthcare provider** your concerns so they can put things right.
- If all or some of the care is paid for by the local council you may be able to use their complaints procedures
- If you are concerned about raising this directly with the provider, contact the **Care Quality Commission** <http://www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cfm>

Complaining about your council

- Your local council is legally required to have a complaints procedure about the social services it provides. Contact them directly for this.
- To find your local council contact details, [Visit the Direct Gov website](#)



Tips on complaining

The website '**How to complain**' contains lots of good common sense advice on making any type of complaint. <http://www.howtocomplain.com>. These top tips are adapted from advice taken from their site.

Before you complain

- **Be clear in your mind why you are dissatisfied.** Was it the way you were treated? A wrong decision? What exactly went wrong?
- **Be clear in your own mind what you want to happen as a result of making a complaint.** Do you want an apology? Do you want a different decision? Do you want the proper service that should have been provided in the first place? You should mention this in your complaint and ask for prompt action.

Valuable hints to remember

- **Keep a record of events.** If you speak to someone on the phone make a note of who you speak to, when and what was said. If you use 'snail mail' then keep a copy of your letter and any replies you receive.
- **Keep the evidence.** Retain all receipts/invoices, letters and e-mails regarding services that you may have received. If you are asked to present these at any stage then present copies and keep the originals yourself.
- **Stay Calm.** If you have confronted someone directly then don't let the emotion of the moment get to you. If you are clearly not getting an adequate response, then simply take the next step in the procedure as advised above. Don't be shy to use a bit of humour.
- **Write clearly and concisely.** Be polite and courteous but don't be afraid to convey the detail of any incident and to articulate your disappointment.
- **Be clear about what you think would resolve your complaint.**
- **You should make an attempt to know your rights.**
- **Don't give up.**
- **Praise where praise is deserved.**

General Tips on letter writing

- Try to make sure your letter is sent to the right person or department.
- Try and keep your letter short.
- Be polite as sarcasm or rudeness will not help your cause!
- Say what you want for your complaint to be resolved.
- Give a reasonable timetable for action to be taken before you will consider other options.
- Keep a copy of letters you write.