



North of England
Commissioning Support

Partners in improving local health

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NHS Complaints Information

North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) supports Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other NHS organisations to improve health services for everyone.

We welcome feedback, both positive and negative, about NHS services commissioned or provided by those organisations as well as about NECS itself.

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you, a relative or someone you care for has received, you have the right to make a complaint, have it looked into and get a response.

Within the NHS we aim to make sure all complaints are handled well and that appropriate action is taken in order to try and resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction.

Can my issue be resolved without formally complaining?

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking with the staff involved. This might give you the response you require without having to take the matter further.

You can also contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who can provide confidential advice and support to help you resolve queries and concerns about your NHS care within a hospital trust informally without having to make a formal complaint.

- PALS do not investigate complaints but will provide informal support in resolving a query or concern

- PALS cannot help with issues which have already been raised via the NHS complaints procedure or with social care complaints
- PALS does not provide medical advice

Find out more about PALS on the NHS Choices website via the link below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1082.aspx?CategoryID=68&SubCategoryID=153>

What is NECS role in the local complaints process?

Local CCGs have asked the NECS to manage complaints on their behalf. Therefore if your complaint is about a CCG commissioning or funding decision you should contact the CCG in question. The CCG will need to pass the information on to NECS to deal with. If you are not happy for these details to be shared with NECS you must make it clear at the time of raising your complaint that you do not give consent for the details to be shared.

If we receive complaints about the services NECS provides, we deal with those ourselves, internally.

Who can help me make a complaint?

The Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) team can guide and support you through the complaints process. They can help put your complaint in writing and attend meetings with you; however, the ICA team does not investigate complaints.

For Northumberland complaints, Healthwatch Northumberland provide advocacy support either via telephone on 03332 408 468 or via e-mail at info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk.

For Cumbria complaints, Best Life Advocacy provide advocacy support via either via telephone on 0300 303 8037 or via email at admin@peoplefirstcumbria.co.uk.

For Stockton complaints, Stockton ICA provide advocacy support either via telephone on 0808 1729553 or via email sica@pcp.uk.net

In all other areas of the North East, the Carers Federation provide advocacy support either via telephone on 0808 802 3000 or via email at ica@carersfederation.co.uk.

Who can complain?

Anyone can complain about NHS services or treatment they have received or if they have been affected by the actions or decisions of an NHS organisation or primary care practitioner. If you are unable to complain yourself, someone can act on your behalf with your consent.

When should I make a complaint?

A complaint should be made within 12 months from the date the issue occurred or when it came to your attention. In some cases, if there is good reason why you could not complain sooner and if it is still possible to investigate your complaint, it may be possible to waive the time limit.

What happens if my complaint involves a number of different organisations?

If your complaint involves more than one NHS organisation or the NHS and social care (provided by the local authority) you need to complain to just one of the organisations. You will also receive a single, coordinated response.

How do I make a complaint?

The NHS complaints procedure aims to resolve complaints quickly, at source. This is called 'local resolution' and means you should complain to the organisation that provided the service you're unhappy with first.

You can make your complaint in writing, by email, or verbally. If you make your complaint verbally, you will be asked to sign and return a written record to ensure that you agree with the contents.

To find out more about the NHS complaints procedure please visit the NHS choices website via the link below

<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints/Pages/NHScomplaints.aspx>

Where do I send my complaint?

If your complaint is about a hospital, community or mental health service or independent provider you should send this to the NHS organisation involved.

If your complaint is about a GP practice, dental practice, community pharmacy or optician you should send it direct to that organisation.

If your complaint is about a CCG commissioning or funding decision you should send this to your local CCG.

You can find your local CCG on the NHS Choices website via the link below

<http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/clinical-commissioning-group/locationsearch/1>

If your complaint is about a function or service provided by the North of England Commissioning Support Unit you should send your complaint to:

In writing: Complaints Team, North of England Commissioning Support Unit, John Snow House, University Science Park, Durham, DH1 3YG

Tel: 0191 374 4218

Email: necsu.complaints@nhs.net

Face to face meetings can be arranged with the Complaints Team, however, these are by appointment only. This service is not offered on a drop in basis.

Information about complaints is available in other languages and formats upon request.

What happens if I complain to the commissioner (the people who choose and buy services)?

Some people prefer to send their complaint to the commissioner of NHS services. This is fine; however, the health-care provider (for example the GP surgery or hospital) will normally be given the opportunity to respond to your complaint.

CCGs commission local hospital, community and mental health services so you can send a complaint about these services to your CCG. This will then be sent to the relevant provider organisation who, with your consent, will investigate and respond to your complaint.

NHS England commissions primary care services (such as GPs and dental practices) and, if you prefer, you can send your complaint about these services to NHS England at the address below:

In writing: NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT
Tel: 0300 311 22 33
Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

What can I expect in response?

When you submit your complaint it would be helpful if you could be clear what you would like to achieve as a result of making your complaint so that the NHS can try to resolve the matter to your satisfaction.

Your complaint will be fully investigated in a manner that is fair to both you and staff involved.

If failings are identified during the investigation, any necessary improvements will be made to the quality of services.

You will receive a written response to your complaint, which will include information on any service improvements.

What happens if I am unhappy with the response?

If you remain unhappy with how your complaint has been handled you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to review your complaint. You should take your complaint to the PHSO within a year of when you first became aware of the problem. If it was more than a year ago, the PHSO may still be able to help you if there were good reasons for the delay. You can contact the PHSO at the address below:

In writing: PHSO, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Helpline: 0345 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk