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Havering NHS Complaints Advocacy Self-Help Pack

Table of contents

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1a. How to read the Self– Help Pack.....	4
1b. Complaints Process Diagram.....	4
1c. What is NHS Complaints Advocacy?.....	5
1d. Who can make a complaint?.....	5
2. Accessing NHS Complaints Advocacy in Havering	6
3. What can an Advocate do for me?	7
4. NHS Complaints Process Guide	8
4a. Considerations & <i>Flowchart</i> Options.....	9
5. NHS Complaints Process: Stage 1	10 /11
5a. The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALs).....	12
6. NHS Complaints Process: Stage 2- Making a formal complaint	13/14
6a. Structuring your Complaint.....	15
6b. Sample Complaint letter.....	16
6c. Acknowledging your complaint.....	17
6d. Local Resolution Meetings.....	18
6e. Understanding the NHS’s response.....	19
7. NHS Complaints Process: Stage 3- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)	20/21
7a. Secondary Review.....	22
8. Useful Contacts	23/24

1. Introduction

The provision of Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) was made a legal requirement by the Secretary of State for Health under section 248 (1) of the National Health Service Act 2006. These services operated from 2003 to April 2013, commissioned by the Department of Health and provided by select suppliers. However, these services were short lived and were replaced by NHS Complaints Advocacy in April 2013. The new NHS Complaints Advocacy services were now commissioned by local authorities for residents in the borough wanting support in making a complaint about their experiences with their NHS Providers. The framework for handling NHS complaints consists of a universal two-tier process comprising of

1) local resolution and 2) Appeal to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO), if local resolution fails.

Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham (MiTHN)

Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham (MiTHN) are a community mental health charity, providing people living with mental health or emotional issues with information, advice and support. MiTHN aim to work in partnership with people and communities to promote and support mental health, wellbeing, resilience and recovery and to challenge stigma.

Havering Integrated Advocacy Service

In the London Borough of Havering, Mind In Tower Hamlets and Newham (MiTHN) has been commissioned to manage the contract for NHS Complaints Advocacy services which forms part of the Havering Integrated Advocacy Service, with Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham (MiTHN) overseeing the quality and delivery of the service.



1a: How to Read the Self-Help Pack

How to read the self-help information pack?

The following self-help pack aims to help you understand the NHS complaints process and how you can raise a concern or make a formal complaint.

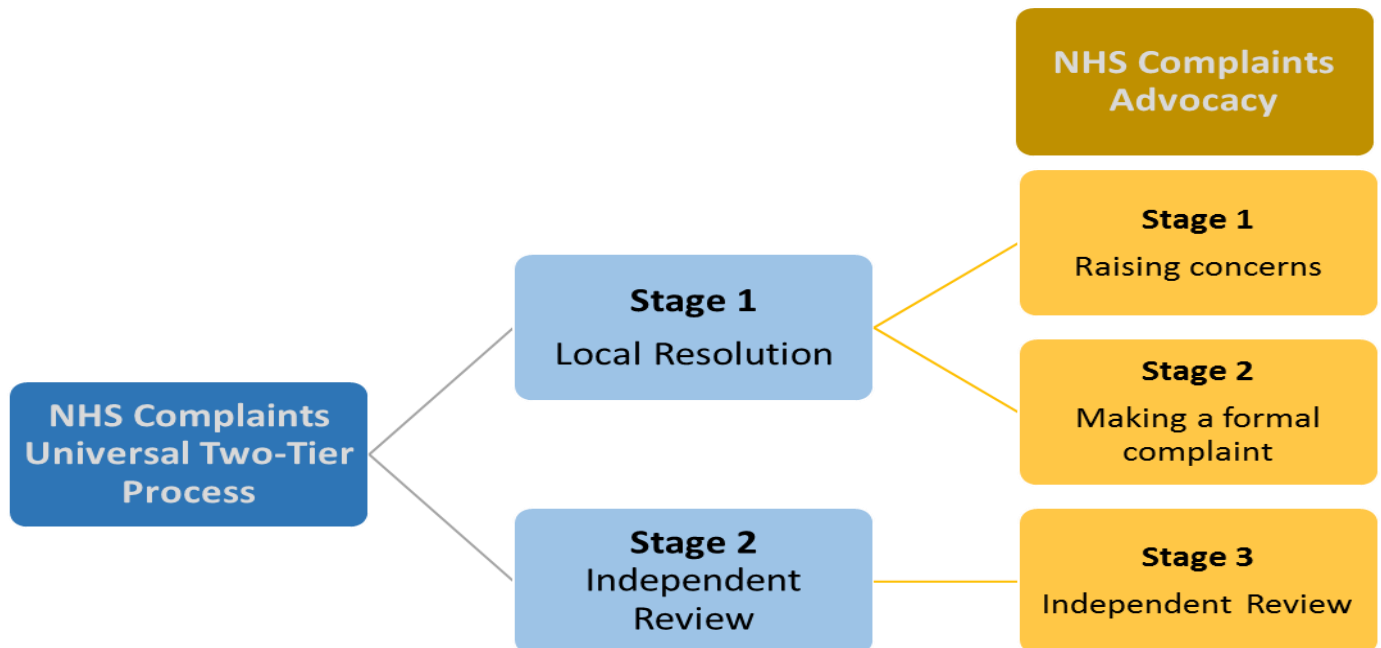
You can choose to **Self-Advocate** and raise your concern yourself or choose to seek assistance from the **NHS Complaints Advocate**.

Whatever you choose to decide this pack provides a step-by-step guide with important information at each stage of the process and useful tips. There are **two stages** the NHS Complaints process which are 1) Local Resolution and 2) Independent Review.

Stage 1- Local Resolution- refers to resolving the complaint or addressing the concerns as locally as possible. This could be either achieved 1) informally by discussing the concerns directly with the NHS service or 2) by making a formal complaint either to the NHS service or their providers.

1b: Complaints Process Diagram

The following diagram provides an overview of all the important stages of the complaints process. The NHS Complaints Advocate will be available to discuss these with you so that you are aware of the options available to you no matter where you are in the NHS complaints process.



1c: What is NHS Complaints Advocacy?

The National Health Service (NHS) works hard to make sure patients and their families are satisfied with their services and receive good quality treatment and care.

However, sometimes things go wrong and this might affect you, a friend or a family member.

You might not be sure about what you can do about the concerns you have about the treatment and care provided.

The NHS Complaints Advocacy service aims to provide support to the residents of the London Borough of Havering wanting to raise concerns or making a formal complaint about their experiences with their NHS providers.

The service especially aims to provide support to those who may not have the skills, knowledge or ability to make a complaint.

Similar services include, the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) created in 2002. PALS are part of the NHS Trust, they are available on hospital site for patients and their families wanting to discuss their treatment and/or care whilst in hospital. However, the service does not replace the formal NHS Complaints process. If you want to make a formal complaint, PALS will let you know that you are entitled to access the NHS Complaints Advocacy service, a free, independent and confidential service.

The NHS Complaints Advocacy service can support anyone who is unhappy with the care or treatment they or someone they know has received from the NHS.

The service can help you raise concerns or make a formal complaint about the treatment either you or someone you know has experienced.

1d: Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint about the care and/or treatment they have received from the NHS in England.

You can make a complaint for yourself and even on behalf of someone you know if you have their consent to do so.

You can complain about any service that is funded/commissioned by the NHS. These include; GP practices, hospitals, clinics and may also include sheltered accommodation and social care homes.

The NHS Complaints Process **cannot** help you make a complaint about private healthcare or services that are funded by the Local Authorities. Private health services have their own complaints process.

The NHS Complaints Process **cannot** be used to discipline NHS staff members.

You **can** speak to your NHS Complaints Advocate if you are unsure if the service you want to complaint about comes under the NHS Complaints Regulations.

2: Accessing the service

Accessing NHS Complaints Advocacy service in Havering

If you want support in raising concerns or making a formal complaint or just want to have a quick chat about your experiences, don't worry- we can help!

What happens next?

If you require NHS Complaints Advocacy support and you or the person you are making the complaint on behalf of is a resident of Havering you can call our main information line on 01708 560 660 or email your query to havering.advocacy@mithn.org.uk. Our lines have a 24 hour answerphone, so leave a message and somebody will get back to you as soon as possible.

Once we have received your request to speak to an advocate, we aim to **acknowledge** your query within **2 working days**. You will be asked to complete the registration process. Our advocate will then arrange a meeting at our Havering office to discuss your concerns in more detail. We aim to provide you with **next steps information within 5 working days**. We can also provide an interpreter and discuss any other language/communication requirements.

Our service is **free, independent and confidential**. We have a secure database where we store details and information. This is only shared between the Havering Integrated Advocacy Service (as part of MiTHN). We will **not** share your information with any third parties without your consent. You can ask your advocate for a copy of the confidentiality policy.

The NHS Complaints Advocacy Service opening hours:

Monday to Friday (may be subject to change)

From 09.00am until 5.00pm

Address: NHS Complaints Advocacy Service
Harrow Lodge House
Hornchurch Road
Hornchurch
RM11 1JU





Phone: 01708 560 660






Email: havering.advocacy@mithn.org.uk

www: mithn.org.uk

3: What can an Advocate do for me?

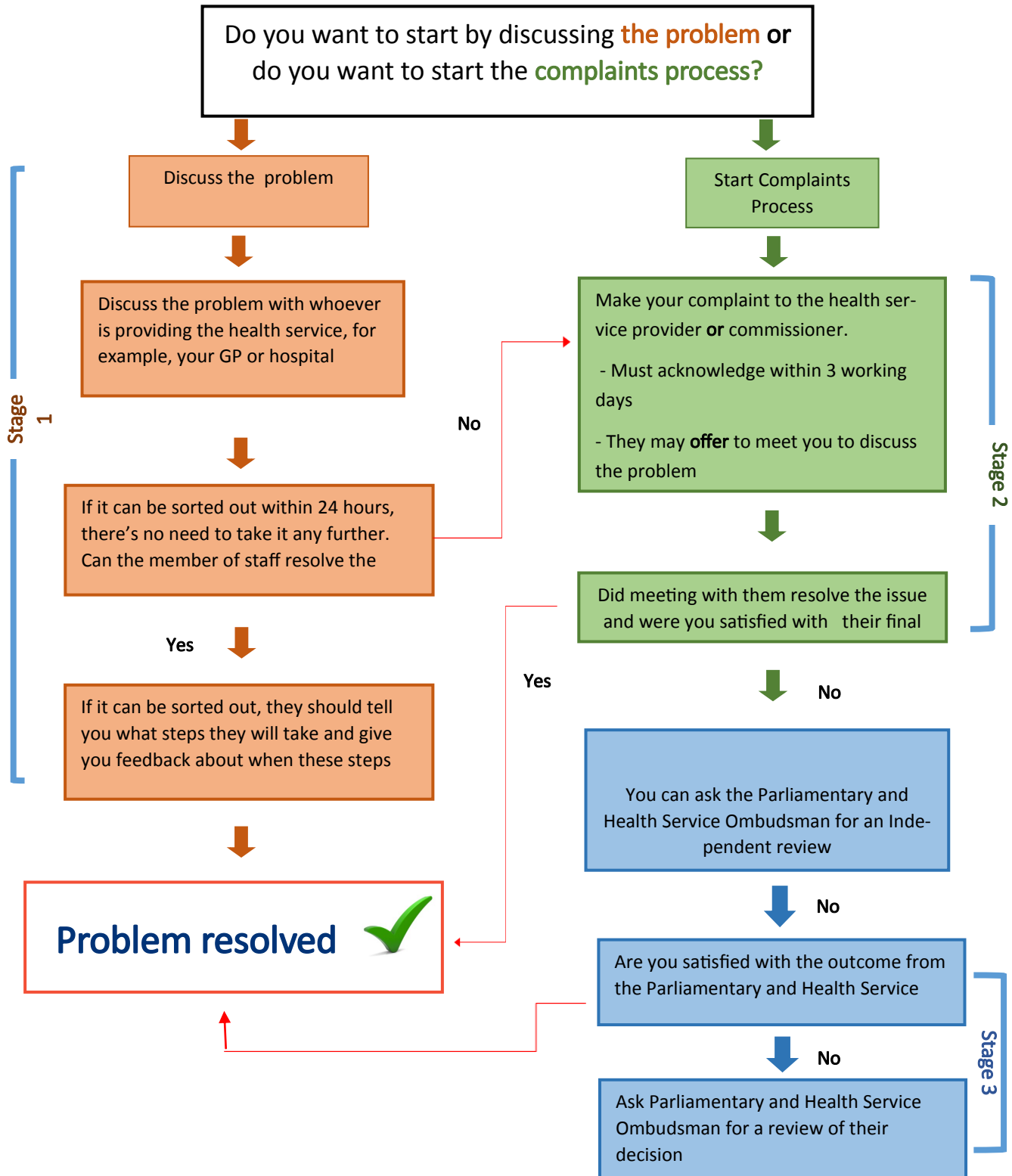
The NHS complaints advocacy is a free, confidential and independent service which you can self-refer to at any time and available to all Havering residents. The following lists are to give you a general idea of the role of an NHS Complaints Advocate, more specific roles in each stage of the complaint process will be detailed throughout the self-help information pack.

we can	
Support you to understand the information given to you so that you can make an informed decision	
Explore the options available to you at each stage of the complaints process	
Support you to write a raising a concern/complaints letter or can provide you with a template	
Help you arrange and prepare for meetings in relation to your complaint and accompany you if necessary	
Signpost you to the right people where appropriate	
Contact the NHS organisation and third parties relating to your complaint, on your behalf with your consent	
Help you decide whether you are satisfied with the response you receive from the NHS provider	

we cannot	
Give you advice or try to persuade you to take a particular course of action	
Help you in taking legal action- but we can signpost you to those who can	
Help you with compensation claims	
Aid you in any matters which fall outside of the NHS Complaints process- but we can signpost you to those who can	
Make choices for you	
Investigate or take sides, rather we support you to speak up about what you want	
Make calls or write letters/ emails on your behalf without your consent	

4. NHS Complaints Process Guide

For some the NHS Complaints process may be confusing or even a complicated process to navigate. The aim of The NHS Complaints Advocacy Service is to make sure you understand the process, the options that are available to you at each stage so that you can make an informed decision. We can provide guidance at any stage, even if you're unsure, ready to make a formal complaint and what to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome.



4a: Consider the following..

Before raising concerns/making a formal complaint

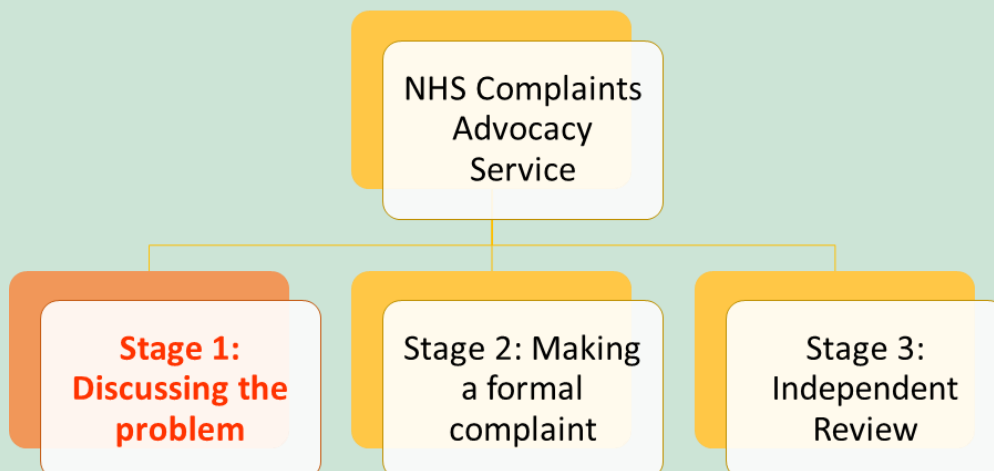
Think about.....

What am I unhappy about?

What do I want to achieve?

How soon do I need my issues resolved?

Options



7. Stage 1. Making a Complaint

Discussing the problem- Giving feedback

Giving feedback is encouraged and helps improve the quality of your care and others. You can give good or bad feedback by telling the NHS service about it. If you are not happy with your NHS service, it is important to discuss your concerns early on with the provider of the service. Depending on the cause for concern, this may be a quicker route to resolving your problems. Some matters require immediate attention, for example, if you are concerned with the treatment or care or would like to raise alert to an incident during admission in hospital, you may want to speak with the Patient Advisory Liaison service (PALS) (to read more about PALS, turn to page 16)

Raising concerns- Where do I begin?

Think about what you're unhappy about, for example:

Is it the treatment?

Is it the behaviour of the staff?

Waiting times?

Think about what you want to achieve from raising the concern, for example:

Do you want acknowledgment/apology for what happened?

Would a follow up appointment help resolve the issue?

You can give general feedback via the methods available at the service (ask the services/ward reception staff)

Raise your concerns either directly to those you have concerns about or to their managers. You can do this verbally or in writing

You can request to meet with the relevant people in the NHS organisation to discuss your concerns

What happens after I've raised a concern?

Your NHS service might write back to you addressing your concerns

(read *Understanding the NHS's response* on page 25)

They may request to meet with you, if they think it will help them to resolve your issues (read more about *local resolution meetings* on page 23)

It's important to note that if your concerns have been raised informally, they **cannot** be escalated to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO), this option is available **only** after making a formal complaint at Local Resolution Stage 2.

7. Making a Complaint Stage 1

Case Study

Mrs Snow was very unhappy with her GP. As a patient with fibromyalgia, she suffered from severe muscle pains on a day-to-day basis. Mrs Snow felt that she was not getting the appropriate treatment or care from her GP and found it very difficult to express her views due to the language barriers. Mrs Snow discussed the problem with her NHS Complaints Advocate, who explained the NHS complaints process. Both the advocate and Mrs Snow explored the options and what outcomes Mrs Snow wanted from making the complaint. Mrs Snow explained that she really just wanted her doctor to know how she was feeling and whether there was anything available to help her deal with the pain. Mrs Snow decided to write a letter of concern to speed up the resolution process. Her advocate drafted a letter detailing Mrs Snow's concerns and desired outcomes, which was sent to her GP's practice. Shortly after, Mrs Snow received a resolution meeting request where a pain management care plan was discussed. Mrs Snow was happy with the outcome and the matter was resolved to her satisfaction.

***Names have been changed to protect the identity of the client*

Stage 1- How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me?

Your NHS Complaints Advocate can:

Meet with you to discuss the problem

Liaise with PALs on your behalf, with your consent and chase any queries you might have made

Help you arrange any resolution meetings to discuss your problem with the relevant people

Help you draft a letter with your concerns

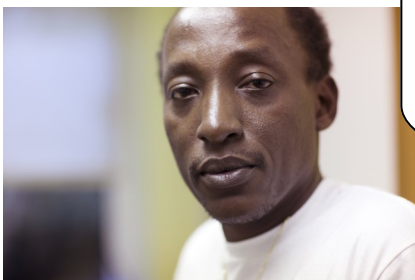
Provide you with the next steps

Help you understand the NHS's response to your letter see page 25

Help you explore stage 2 of the NHS Complaints Process

What if I'm not happy with the NHS's response?

If the issue is resolved within 24 hours and you are happy, there is no need to take it further. If you are unhappy with the results, you can escalate your concern into a formal complaint and move on to Stage 2 of the process on page 17.



5a: Patient Advice and Liaison Service

If you do not want to raise a formal complaint and would like to resolve the matter as soon as possible, you may wish to discuss your concerns with PALS first, to try and resolve the problems locally. PALS does NOT investigate formal complaints and does NOT replace the NHS Trust's formal complaints process.

Who are PALS?

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a confidential service set up by the NHS in 2002 for patients, carers, relatives and friends who may require help, advice and information regarding a service within the NHS Trust. PALS services operates on all sites of the Trust and have access to all members of staff as well as a central patient liaison team, allowing them to negotiate quick solutions to problems or questions.

What can PALS do?

PALS can:

- Advice and support patients and their families and carers
- Listen to your concerns
- Give you information about support groups outside the NHS

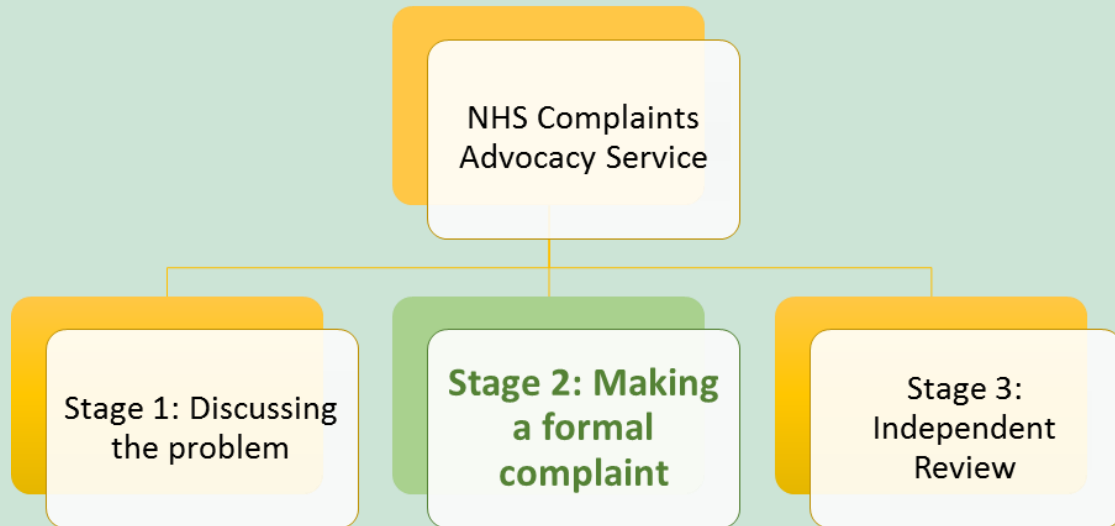
What is the difference between PALS and NHS Complaints Advocacy?

PALS	NHS COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY
Staffs are employed by the NHS	An independent service and not answerable to the NHS
Can give you information and assist you in local resolution and how to access the local NHS Complaints process	Are specialists who can support you with your complaint no matter where you are in the NHS Complaints process
Can help with concerns that need immediate attention. They are available to sort out any concerns that may arise in using the Trust's services.	Will support you to explore a range of options so that you can make an informed decision about the progress of your complaint

If you are still unhappy after contacting PALS and wish to make a formal complaint, with your consent, both PALS and NHS Complaints Advocacy can refer your case to each other if there is mutual agreement and you feel that this would be the best course of action for you to help resolve the issue. Your NHS Complaints Advocate can also provide any follow up to queries or correspondences from PALS relating to your complaint.

6. Stage 2: Making a Formal Complaint

Making a formal complaint (Local Resolution)



The NHS complaints process aims to resolve matters as locally as possible. You are not required to raise/discuss your concerns informally first in order to write a formal complaint, you may decide that you want to skip Stage 1 and make a formal complaint instead. Or you might have already raised/discussed your concerns informally and you're not happy with the outcome. This may also be the best route if what happened raises serious standards of care, complex issues that require investigation or if your concerns involve more than one organisation within the NHS Trust



Can I make a formal complaint?

This checklist should help you decide whether you can make a formal complaint about your concerns. This is **only** a guide, speak to your NHS complaints advocate if you're unsure or if you're unable to tick "yes" to any of the statements below:

- The services, staff, department I want to complaint about are employed/funded/commissioned by the NHS
- I am making a complaint within a year of the incident happening
- I am complaining about an incident that happened over a year ago, but I am making a complaint within 12 months of realising and/or I have good reasons for not complaining earlier

6a: Formal Complaints continued.

Stage 2- How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me?

Your NHS Complaints Advocate can:

Meet with you to discuss the problem

Liaise with the NHS complaints department, on your behalf, with your consent and chase any queries you might have made

Help you arrange any resolution meetings to discuss your problem with the relevant people

Help you draft a formal complaint letter

Provide you with the next steps

Help you understand the NHS service's response to your complaint

Provide you with next steps to your complaint.

Prepare your complaint for independent review Stage 3 (if required), see page 27

Who do I make a formal complaint to?

For complaints about:

NHS staff, ward, department, care homes*, social services*, mental health

GP, dentist, pharmacist or optometrist

A commissioning/funding decision that has affected you

Write/speak to the:

NHS Trust of the hospital, responsible for the management and run-

Practice Manager or NHS England, responsible for the management and running of the service

Local clinical commissioning group (CCG)



62: Structuring your complaint

Writing/making a verbal complaint

Go to page 20 to read a sample formal complaint letter

Think about what you're unhappy about, for example;

Is it the treatment?

Is it the behaviour of the staff?

Waiting times?

Think about what you want the NHS organisation to investigate or provide answers to, for example;

Would you like them to investigate the waiting times at your GP practice?

Think about what you want to achieve from making the complaint, for example;

Do you want acknowledgment/apology for what happened?

Would a follow up appointment help resolve the issue?

TIPs for structuring your concerns/complaint verbally or written

The PEC method

POINT- What is the point you want to make?

Evidence- When did this happen? Who was involved? Where did this happen?

Comment/Concern- How did this make you feel? What impact did this have on you?

Example:

POINT

EVIDENCE

[I was not given the appropriate treatment and care.] [During my last appointment with Dr Bob on the 28th July 2015, I was told I have to take painkillers and was not offered an X-ray despite the prolonged swelling. My appointment was also cut down to 2 minutes.] [I felt I was not being treated fairly and my concerns were not listened to, I feel it was his duty to explore all treatment options.]

COMMENT/CONCERN

If your complaint concerns more than one NHS organisation, you only need to send a letter to one of the organisations; they will liaise with the other organisation(s) involved and provide a coordinated response

If your complaint concerns more than one NHS Trust, you will be required to complain to them separately

Final tips!

Keep a copy and a log of any letters/communications

Write the complaint in an unemotional way- avoid personal attacks, for example, it is okay to say "I felt the consultant was not taking me seriously because of the way he handled my treatment and care" rather than "I did not like the consultant because he didn't look like he knew what he was doing"

Keep your letter to the point and as concise as possible

6b: Writing a Formal Letter

Writing a formal complaint letter- How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me?

Your NHS Complaints Advocate can:

Help you draft the letter with your concerns

Proofread the letter before you send it to the relevant NHS complaints department

Make sure all your concerns are expressed clearly and your desired outcomes are included

Provide you with the details of where you need to send the letter

Sample Letter

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Complaint handler's name]

[Complaint handler's address]

[DATE]

Dear whomever this may concern

Subject: [Formal complaint] or [Raising concerns] regarding inadequate treatment and care at [name of NHS service]

[your full name], [your date of birth],[your NHS number]

I am writing this [letter of complaint] or [letter to raise concerns] regarding the care and treatment I received from [name of NHS service and organisation]. I would also like to complain about the attitude and rude behaviour I experienced from the doctor.

I attended [name of practice] due to a swollen ankle I have been experiencing since [date]. I was not given the appropriate treatment and care when I visited [name of practice]. During my last appointment with [name of physician] on the [date of incident]. I was told I have to take painkillers and was not offered an X-ray despite the prolonged swelling. My appointment was also cut down to 2 minutes. I felt I was not being treated fairly and my concerns were not listened to, I feel it was his duty to explore all treatment options with his patients. Furthermore, it is potentially dangerous to allow patients to find out information on their own without guidance.

I was also treated very rudely by [name of physician] during my appointment [date]. I asked the doctor for further information regarding the prescribed painkillers. Instead of providing the information, the Dr said I will find the information online and that he does not have time to answer my questions. I felt this was unprofessional and the attitude was unnecessary.

Taking the above into consideration I would like a full and thorough investigation into my concerns to be carried out, a clear response and solutions regarding the following:

Why did [name of physician] not offer me other treatment options?

Why was I not given the full time of my appointment and instead given only 2 minutes to speak about my concerns?

Why was I not given proper information about my medication and instead told to look for the information online?

I would like a full acknowledgment and written apology from [name of physician]. I do not feel his attitude and rude behaviour was appropriate. I would like to know what the Trust will be doing to make sure physicians are giving patients their full appointment times and how they will ensure physicians are exploring all treatment options with their patients.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for clarifications on [phone number] or via [email address]. I would also like correspondence for my complaint to be shared with my NHS Complaints Advocate [name of advocate] on [advocates email].

Yours sincerely

[Your name]

6c: Acknowledging your Complaint

What can I expect after I've made a formal complaint?

After making your complaint, you should expect the following in accordance with **The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009**:

1. An **acknowledgement** of receipt of your complaint within **3 days** (Section 13 (4))
2. An **agreed timeframe** for when you should expect to receive their response to your complaint. (Section 13(7))

The NHS organisation **must** respond to your complaint **within 6 months** of receiving your complaint (Section 14 (3))

The deadline for the response will depend on the complexity of your case. As a guide, if your case can be easily investigated and resolved, the NHS services aim to respond to complaints within 25 working days. If your case needs an extension, your complaints officer should inform you about this and give you the reasons for the delay (Section 14 (4))

I've made my complaint but I didn't receive an acknowledgment or any timeframe information about when I should expect to hear from them, what do I do now?

Don't hesitate to call them

Ask about your complaint reference number and ask to speak to the complaints officer handling your case, your complaints officer should be able to tell you how long investigating your case will take.



It's been over 6 months and I still haven't received their response to my complaint, what happens now?



You should receive regular updates about your case. If the NHS Service fails to meet their initial agreed deadline to respond to your complaint, they should inform you as soon as possible, give you the reasons for the delay and a new mutually agreed timeframe should be applied.

If the service fails to respond to you within 6 months of making the complaint, speak to your NHS Complaints Advocate to find out what you can do next.

6d: Local Resolution Meeting

Whether you're raising concerns/discussing your problems informally or making a formal complaint, your NHS provider may offer to meet with you to answer your questions and to discuss your concerns in more detail. Your NHS Complaints Advocate can support you before, during and after local resolution meetings.

What is a local resolution meeting?

Local resolution meetings are usually arranged by the NHS service to give you the opportunity to discuss your concerns with a member of staff from the complaints/quality department.

Local Resolutions meetings can:

- Give you and the NHS Service the opportunity for the NHS Service to discuss and answer some of your questions/concerns before the final response to your complaint.
- Take place or can be requested by complainant or NHS service at any time throughout the NHS Complaints process, Stages 1 (see section 5) and 2 (see section 6)
- Also take place at the request of the complainant, if the request is declined, you should be informed of the reasons by the NHS service.

How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me during local resolution meetings?

Before your local resolution meeting;

Your advocate can:

- Help you prepare for the meeting in an "action plan meeting"
- Note points and concerns you want to raise at the meeting
- Help you organise your concerns within the time given for the meeting

During the local resolution meeting;

Your advocate can:

- Accompany you to your meetings
- Only act on instruction
- Ask for something to be explained more simply or for clarification, to make sure you have understood the explanation provided or if they feel the questions raised were not answered
- Reiterate your concerns but **cannot** raise points **not** discussed in the action plan meeting or ask questions of their own
- Ensure the meeting is as productive as possible by marking/ticking off the points that have been covered but **cannot** take minutes or notes
- They can highlight where apologies or explanations have been provided in writing, but if you are still unhappy or want more information, your advocate **will not** prevent you from asking the same questions again.

After the local resolution meeting;

Your advocate can:

- Help you understand the information provided in the meeting
- Meet with you to discuss the points raised in the meeting but **cannot** offer their own opinions on a complaint or discuss issues that fall outside of the NHS complaints process i.e. legal action
- Discuss next steps (if necessary)

6d: Understanding the NHS's Response

After the NHS complaints department has finished their investigation you should receive a letter from the complaints officer or head of department. If you or the NHS organisation request a local resolution meeting, as a guide, this usually takes place before the response to your complaint is finalised. However, in some cases, the meeting can take place even after the NHS's response to your complaint (read more about *Local Resolution meetings* on page 23). When the investigation is completed and any meetings have been held, you should receive a letter including the following:

- A summary of your complaint
- Findings from the investigation
- Actions that are going to be taken as a result of the investigation
- What you can do if you are dissatisfied with the answers given

The Health Service Ombudsman has produced a set of six clear principles for good complaints handling, these are expected to be followed by all NHS organisations when dealing with your complaint. You can find more information on www.ombudsman.org.uk

Your letter should:

- Be balanced, factual and impartial
- Address all the issues raised in your complaint and acknowledge what you were hoping to achieve from making the complaint
- Be clear and easy to understand

Sometimes a deadline is given for you to discuss any of the matters raised in the response letter, if they do not hear back from you, the case may be closed. If your case has been closed, try to contact them as soon as possible - it can be reopened under exceptional circumstances. Your advocate can give you information about what you can do next. Your advocate can also help you find it if your reasons meet the exceptions criteria.

Understanding the NHS's response- How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me?

Your NHS Complaints Advocate can:

Meet with you to help you understand the information in your response letter

- Help you arrange any resolution meetings to discuss your problem with the relevant people (if possible)
- Help you draft a response to the NHS response letter (if necessary)
- Help you escalate your complaint to Stage 3 if you are unhappy

What if I'm not happy with the NHS's response?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way your complaint was handled;

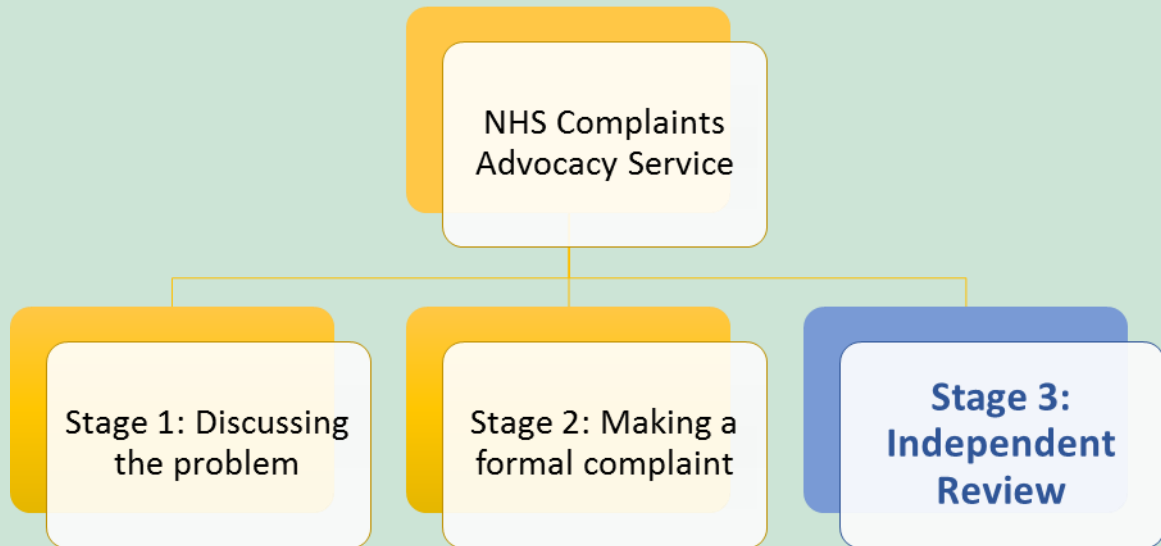
- It helps to go over the outcomes you wanted to achieve
- Or you can rewrite to them and ask them to review their findings/ decisions
- Or you can escalate your complaint to Stage 3 for an independent review by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) page 27, once a final response has been received from the NHS.

This is the end of the independent review process.

7: Stage 3: Independent Review

Stage 3:

An Independent Review- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)



7: Stage 3 Independent Review

Escalating your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

You can escalate your complaint to the PHSO if you have tried exhausted the options explained in Stage 2 to resolve the complaint. The PHSO will not investigate a complaint just because you do not agree with a decision made by the NHS service, you will need to offer evidence as to why the NHS's decision is wrong or unsatisfactory. The PHSO's primary aim is to ensure that your complaint was handled according to the NHS Complaints Regulations and to make sure the NHS service responded to you fairly. They are considered the **final stage** for unresolved complaints and use a 3 step process when dealing with your complaint

Step 1- What happens once they receive my complaint?

The PHSO will not consider complaints that have not been responded to by the NHS service, if the NHS Service has not responded to your complaint within 6 months of making the complaint, speak to your NHS Complaints Advocate for next steps.

The PHSO begin with initial checks to make sure they can deal with your complaint this includes looking into the organisation and the issue you are complaining about and whether you have exhausted the organisations own complaints process. The PHSO aim to complete these checks within five working days and will inform you of their decision shortly after.

Step 2- Deciding whether to investigate your complaint

Whether the PHSO decide to investigate your case or not, you will be informed of their decision in writing or via email within 20 working days of receiving your complaint. If they decide to investigate your complaint, they look at several things including, the personal impact the cause for complaint has had on you, whether you have or had the option of taking legal action instead and whether there are signs that the organisation's actions have had a negative effect on you and it has not been put right.

Step 3- Investigating your complaint

If the PHSO have decided to investigate your complaint, they will talk to you about your concerns and what they will be investigating. They will also let you know how long the investigation will take and will keep you regularly updated. Before making their final decision, the PHSO gather all the information from yourself and the organisation you have complained about.

If the PHSO decide to uphold your complaint it means that they "found the organisation got things wrong that have had a negative effect on you which hasn't been put right." They will inform you of their findings and can recommend what the organisation should do about it.

7a: Stage 3 Secondary Review

What can I do if I am not satisfied with their decision?

If you are not happy that the PHSO have either decided not to uphold or investigate your complaint, or you are not happy with their findings, you can resubmit your complaint for a secondary review by the PHSO. The secondary review, is a process where the PHSO decide whether their initial decision to either upholding or deciding not to investigate the complaint were right or wrong. Again, the PHSO will not simply reconsider looking at your complaint just because you disagree, reasons for a secondary review must meet the investigations criteria and you must provide evidence as to why you feel their decision was wrong. If you would like to know more about this part of the process you can either speak to your local NHS Complaints Advocate or speak to the customer care team at the PHSO on 0345 015 4033.

Stage 3- How can my NHS Complaints Advocate support me?

Your NHS Complaints Advocate can:

- Meet with you to help you understand the information in your letter from the PHSO
- Liaise with the PHSO, on your behalf, with your consent and chase the response (if necessary)
- Help you draft a cover letter requesting the PHSO to look into your complaint
- Help you prepare the evidence to go with your cover letter
- Provide you with information about the secondary review if you are dissatisfied with the PHSO's decision



This is the end of the independent review process.

8: Useful Contacts

If you have a complaint about your experience in one of the following hospitals, you can contact:

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (responsible for Queens Hospital, Romford and King Georges Hospital, Goodmayes)- www.bhrhospitals.nhs.uk Tel: 01708 435 032

Barts Health NHS Trust (responsible for Mile End Hospital, Newham University Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital, The Royal London Hospital, Whipps Cross University Hospital)- www.bartshealth.nhs.uk

Central Complaints Team: 020 7480 4776 or 020 7480 4719

PALS team:

The Royal London and Mile End Hospital: 020 3594 2040

Newham and St Bartholomew's Hospital: 0207 363 9292

Whipps Cross Hospital: 0208 535 6438. Email the PALS team at pals@bartshealth.nhs.uk

Or write to: Barts NHS Trust, Central Complaints Team, 3rd Floor, 9 Prescott Street, London, E1 8PR

If you have a complaint about mental health or community services, you can contact:

North East London NHS Foundation Trust www.nelft.nhs.uk

You can call the PALS and Complaints Team on: 0300 555 1201 ext 6690

Or email the Complaints team at nelftcomplaints@nhs.net

Or write to the Complaints Department: Suite 12 Phoenix House, Christopher Martin Road, Basildon, SS14 3EZ

If you want to make a complaint or raise a concern about a GP, dentist, Pharmacist or optometrist, try to contact the practice directly or you can contact:

NHS England (responsible for primary care services)

You can call them on: 0300 311 2233



8: Useful Contacts

If you have a complaint relating to the way an NHS service has been commissioned or you have been directly affected by a commissioning decision made in Havering, you can contact:

Havering Clinical Commissioning Group - www.haveringccg.nhs.uk

You can call them on 020 3182 3400 or email them at bhrcgcs.enquiries@nhs.net

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)- independently review unresolved complaints- www.ombudsman.org.uk

You can call them on: 0345 015 4033

Or you can write to: Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)- provide free independent advice and support to people affected by medical accidents through their specialist helpline, written case-work and inquest support services. They can also refer you to an accredited clinical negligence solicitors if appropriate. www.avma.org.uk

You can call the helpline Mon-Fri 10am-3:30 pm on 0845 123 23 52

Or you can write to; Freedman House, Christopher Wren Yard, 117 High Street, Croydon, CR0 1QG. DX: 144267 Croydon 24





in Tower Hamlets
and Newham



This self-help pack was produced by Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham (MiTHN).

For more advice or information about the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service (Havering):

Call 01708 560 660

email havering.advocacy@mithn.org.uk or

Write to: NHS Complaints Advocate Service Lead, Havering Integrated Advocacy Service, Harrow Lodge House, Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, RM11 1JU

