

# Making a Complaint

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Most problems can be sorted out quickly and easily, often at the time they arise with the person concerned and this may be the approach you try first.

Where you are not able to resolve your complaint in this way and wish to make a formal complaint you should do so, preferably in writing as soon as possible after the event and ideally within a few days, as this helps us to establish what happened more easily. In any event, this should be:

Within 12 months of the incident, or within 12 months of you discovering a complaint giving as much detail as you can.

If you are a registered patient you can complain about your own care. You are unable to complain about someone else's treatment without their written authority. See the separate section in this leaflet.

We are able to provide you with a separate complaints form to register your complaint and this includes a third-party authority form to enable a complaint to be made by someone else. Please ask at reception for this. You can provide this in your own format providing this covers all the necessary aspects.

## **What we do next**

We look to settle complaints as soon as possible.

We will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days, and aim to have looked into the matter within 10 working days. You may then receive a formal reply in writing, or you may be invited to meet with the person(s) concerned to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is likely to take longer than this we will let you know, and keep you informed as the investigation progresses. When looking into a complaint we attempt to see what happened and why, to see if there is something we can learn from this, and make it possible for you to discuss the issue with those involved if you would like to do so.

When the investigations are complete your complaint will be determined and a final response sent to you.

Where your complaint involves more than one organisation (e.g. social services) we will liaise with that organisation so that you receive one coordinated reply. We may need your consent to do this. Where your complaint has been sent initially to an incorrect organisation, we may seek your consent to forward this to the correct person to deal with. The final response letter will include details of the result of your complaint and also your right to escalate the matter further if you remain dissatisfied with the response.

## **Complaining on Behalf of Someone Else**

We keep to the strict rules of medical and personal confidentiality. If you wish to make a complaint and are not the patient involved, we will require the written consent of the patient to confirm that they are unhappy with their treatment and that we can deal with someone else about it.

Where the patient is incapable of providing consent due to illness or accident it may still be possible to deal with the complaint. Please provide the precise details of the circumstances which prevent this in your covering letter.

Please note that we are unable to discuss any issue relating to someone else without their express permission, which must be in writing, unless the circumstances above apply. We may still need to correspond direct with the patient, or may be able to deal direct with the third party, and this depends on the wording of the authority provided.

**If you are dissatisfied with the outcome**

**Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is based at South West Commissioning Support Unit who provide confidential advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available from the NHS.

Sarah Jenkins

PALS Manager

0800 073 0907 or 0117 330 2436

Health Service Ombudsman

Ring complaints Helpline 0345 015 4033

Or email [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk)

Or fax us on 0300 061 4000

Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

The Helpline is open 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday.

Or write to:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

NHS England

Pauline Rowles

Complaints Officer, Quality & Governance Directorate

Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucestershire

NHS England, South Plaza, Marlborough Street, Bristol BS1 3NG

Telephone: (0117) 9002677

Email: [pauline.rowles@nhs.net](mailto:pauline.rowles@nhs.net)

Independent Complaints Advocacy Services South West (ICAS)

This service covers:

Bristol	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
Devon	Dorset
Gloucestershire	Somerset
Wiltshire	

Tel: 0845 120 3782