

Giving feedback or making a complaint about the NHS

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In the NHS in Scotland, we try to give you the best possible care and treatment. You can help us improve services by giving your views, good as well as bad.

This booklet explains:

- how to give feedback, make comments or raise concerns about the health care you receive, and
- how to complain using the NHS complaints procedure.

Giving feedback about the NHS

Tell us about anything that is important to you

For example:

- If you're in hospital or have been recently, you may want to tell us what you think about the care and treatment you received, or about the food or the ward.
- You may want to tell us about something we've done well.
- You may be concerned that you don't have enough information about the care and treatment offered or about visiting hours, car parking or opening times.

How can I give my feedback?

You can give your feedback by:

- talking to a member of staff involved in your care
- filling in a patient survey or questionnaire
- phoning the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88
- telling the Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS) (see page 10 for contact details)

- putting your comments in a suggestion box, or
- contacting your NHS board (see page 10 for how to do this).

What happens to my feedback?

We will use your feedback to improve the services we provide.

Making a complaint about the NHS

What can I complain about?

Things you can complain about include:

- care or treatment you have had or are having in the NHS
- anything to do with the place where you are seen, for example a doctor's surgery, a hospital, a dental practice, an optician, a pharmacy, a prison health centre or an ambulance
- any member of NHS staff involved in your care
- how our services in your local area are organised, if this has affected your care or treatment.

If your complaint also involves another part of the NHS or another organisation, such as social services, we may need to pass it to someone there. We will tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things you can't complain about through the NHS complaints procedure, including:

- private health care or treatment
- services not provided or funded by the NHS, and
- anything you are taking legal action about.

The NHS complaints procedure doesn't usually provide financial compensation. The independent Patient Advice & Support Service may be able to tell you where to get information about specialist solicitors who handle medical negligence claims. See page 10 for contact details.

Who can complain?

You can complain if you have:

- had or are having NHS care or treatment
- visited or used our services or facilities, or
- been affected or are likely to be affected by something we have or haven't done.

You can complain for someone else if you:

- have their agreement to complain – the patient would also need to agree that staff could look at their health records if necessary
- are a child's parent, guardian or main carer and your child is not mature enough to understand how to make a complaint

- have a welfare power of attorney or a welfare guardianship order for someone who cannot make decisions for themselves, and the order specifies that you have the power to make a complaint about health care
- are a relative of, or had a relationship with, a patient who has died and you are concerned about how they were treated before they died, or
- are acting as an advocate for the patient (see page 8 for more about advocacy).

How long do I have to make a complaint?

We have a time limit for complaints. Normally, you must make your complaint:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about, or
- within six months of finding out that you have a reason to complain – but no longer than 12 months after the event.

However, if you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please speak to the person dealing with the complaint. Sometimes we can accept a complaint after the time limit.

You can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman about an NHS decision not to accept your complaint (see page 9 for more information).

How to complain

What should I do?

- If you can, first talk to a member of staff involved in your care. If you do this, we can try to sort out your complaint on the spot.
- If you are unable to talk to the NHS staff involved in your care, you can ask to speak to a senior member of staff or the feedback and complaints officer for the NHS organisation involved.
- You can complain in person, by phone, or in writing. When complaining, you should give:
 - your full name and address (and the patient's name and address if you are complaining for them), and
 - as much helpful information as possible about what happened, where it happened and when.
- You can also make your complaint by fax, email or textphone (if available), but if you do this other people may be able to see your personal information.

Who should I complain to?

- You should first complain directly to the person or organisation providing the service.
- If you don't want to complain directly to health professionals involved in your care, contact your local NHS board to find out who can help you with your complaint – see page 10 of the booklet for how to do this.

- If your complaint is about NHS 24 or the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, you should first speak to the person who was dealing with you. If you do not feel able to do this, speak to the feedback and complaints officer at the organisation. The contact details are on page 11.
- If your complaint is about the Scottish Ambulance Service, you should complain to the Patient Experience Manager at their National Headquarters. The contact details are on page 11
- If your complaint is about the State Hospital, you should complain to the feedback and complaints officer there. The contact details are on page 12.

What happens after I have complained?

- We will try to sort out your complaint on the spot.
- If we are unable to do this, we will write to you within three working days of getting your complaint.
- This letter should:
 - tell you what action we will take to look into your complaint
 - offer you the chance to talk to a member of staff about the complaint
 - give you information about advice and support available through the Patient Advice & Support Service (see page 10 for more information), and
 - give you information about mediation services if this may be helpful (see page 8 for more information).

- We will keep information about you confidential. To investigate your complaint, we may have to talk to other NHS staff about you or show them your health records. If you don't want us to share information from your health records, you should tell us when you make your complaint, but bear in mind this may make it more difficult to look into your complaint.
- We will make a record of your details and complaint, and use it to help us make services better.

When will I get a full response?

- We will write to you with a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint.
- In some cases, we may need more time to give you a full response and won't be able to keep to these timescales. If this happens, we will let you know and tell you why.
- In our response we will let you know the result of our investigation. We will:
 - show that we have looked into your complaint and reply to all the points you make
 - offer you an apology if things have gone wrong
 - explain what we will do to stop what you complained about happening again
 - if necessary, explain why we cannot do anything more about some parts of your complaint
 - offer you the chance to talk to a member of staff if there is anything in the letter you don't understand, and

- include information about the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in case you are unhappy with our response or the way we have handled your complaint and want to take things further (see page 9 for more information).

Who can help me with my complaint?

Patient advice and support

- If you would like to speak to someone for advice or help with making a complaint, please ask a member of staff for details about the independent Patient Advice & Support Service, which is available in your area through local citizens advice bureaux. See page 10 for contact details.

Advocacy

- If you want someone to help you express your views, you can ask for an advocate. An advocate is independent of the NHS and can help make sure your views are heard and get you access to the information you need to make your own decisions. Your local NHS board or the feedback and complaints officer will be able to tell you about advocacy services in your area.

Mediation

- Mediation means bringing people together to try to resolve a complaint.
- An independent mediator will try to help you and the person you have complained about to agree what should happen next.

- Mediation can only be used if you and the person you've complained about both agree to it.
- To find out more about mediation, please ask the person who is dealing with your complaint.

What if I change my mind after I've complained?

You can change your mind about making a complaint at any time. Please let us know as soon as possible. It would be helpful if you could write and tell us, but otherwise a phone call will do.

What if I'm not happy about the way the NHS has handled my complaint?

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

- If the NHS has fully investigated your complaint and you are still not happy, you can ask the SPSO to consider it further.
 - The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about. Sometimes this time limit will not apply. Please contact the SPSO for more information.
 - The SPSO cannot look at matters that have been or are being considered in court.
- If you are not happy with the way the NHS is dealing with your complaint, for example if you think it is taking too long, you can contact the SPSO.

- The Ombudsman does not take up all cases and will decide whether or not to investigate your complaint further.
- See page 12 to find out how to contact the Ombudsman.

How to find out more

- For more information about anything in this booklet, contact:
 - the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)
 - your local citizens advice bureau (CAB) using the phone numbers below. You can also contact a bureau for patient advice and support.

Dalkeith	0131 660 1636
Edinburgh Central CAB	0131 558 3681 (appts) 0131 557 1500 (advice)
Gorgie and Dalry CAB	0131 474 8081 (appts) 0131 474 8080 (advice)
Haddington CAB	01620 824 471
Leith CAB	0131 554 8144
Musselburgh CAB	0131 653 2748
Penicuik CAB	01968 675 259
Pilton CAB	0131 332 9434
Portobello CAB	0131 669 9503 (appts) 0131 669 7138 (advice)
West Lothian CAB	01506 432 977 (advice) 01506 431061 (appts)

If you want to visit your local bureau, you can find the address on the Internet (www.cas.org.uk) or in the telephone directory.

To complain or feedback about services provided or managed by NHS Lothian in any hospital or in the community, including the out-of-hours service, you can write to, using the card in the middle of this booklet, or speak to, the Patient Experience Team, as shown below:

NHS Lothian Patient Experience Team

Freepost RSTR-RLJH-YLTR

NHS Lothian, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EG

Phone **0131 536 3370**

Email feedback@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

If your complaint is about a GP surgery, dental surgery, optician, or pharmacy, please contact them directly.

Scottish Ambulance Service

To complain about the ambulance service, contact:

Patient Experience Manager

Scottish Ambulance Service

National Headquarters, Gyle Square

1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB

Phone 0131 314 0000

NHS 24

To complain about NHS 24, contact:

Patient Affairs Officer

NHS 24 Headquarters

Caledonia House, Fifty Pitches Road

Cardonald Park, Glasgow G51 4ED

Phone **0141 337 4597**

Golden Jubilee National Hospital

To complain about the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, contact:

Feedback and Complaints Officer (Risk Manager)

NHS National Waiting Times Centre Board

Golden Jubilee National Hospital

Agamemnon Street, Clydebank, Glasgow G81 4DY

Phone **0141 951 5177**

State Hospital

To complain about the State Hospital, contact:

Feedback and Complaints Officer

The State Hospital

Carstairs, Lanark ML11 8RP

Phone **01555 842 200**

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Freepost SPSO

Phone **0800 377 7330**

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website www.spsso.org.uk

Information about health rights

- **Confidentiality – it's your right** explains how the NHS protects your personal health information.
- **How to see your health records** explains your right to see or have a copy of your health record.

- **Consent – it's your decision** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment.
- **Health care for overseas visitors** is a set of factsheets explaining what NHS services overseas visitors can expect to receive while they are in Scotland.
- **The Patient Rights Act 2012** is a summary of the rights and responsibilities patients have when using NHS services in Scotland.

Information for young people

- **Consent – your rights** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment.
- **Confidentiality – your rights** tells you how the health service keeps information about you private.
- **Have your say! Your right to be heard** tells you how to give feedback or make a complaint about the NHS.

Information for carers

- **Caring and consent** explains your right to be involved in decisions about the health care of the adult you care for.

You can get this information from:

- GP and dental surgeries, hospitals and other places where you get NHS care
- the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)
- **www.nhsinform.gov.uk**
- your local citizens advice bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at **www.cas.org.uk** or in your local phone book).

Your comments please!

We want to know what you think about this booklet.

Please give us your comments:

- by post to **NHS inform**, NHS 24, Golden Jubilee National Hospital, Beardmore Street, Clydebank G81 4HX
- by emailing us at **nhs.inform@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk**
- by visiting our website at **www.nhsinform.gov.uk** and clicking on the 'contact us' link, or
- by phoning us on **0800 22 44 88**.

We have tried our best to make sure that the information in this booklet is correct. However, the booklet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau, the Patient Advice & Support Service or other advice agency.

Produced by NHS inform

NHS inform
Health information you can trust



To get this booklet in another language or format phone your local NHS board on 0131 536 3370.

للحصول على كراسة 'تقديم شكوى ضد هيئة الرعاية الصحية الوطنية NHS' باللغة العربية اتصل بهاتف المكتب المحلي لهيئة الرعاية الصحية الوطنية (NHS board) على الرقم 0131 536 3370

'NHS সম্পর্কে অভিযোগ করা' তথ্যপত্রটি বাংলায় পেতে চাইলে আপনার স্থানীয় NHS বোর্ডে (NHS board) ফোন করুন : 0131 536 3370

如欲索取《對NHS提出投訴》的中文版本，請致電0131 5363370 聯絡你最近的NHS管理局 (NHS board) 。

Pour obtenir « Faire une réclamation à la NHS » en Français, téléphonez à votre bureau NHS local (NHS board) au 0131 536 3370

'NHS के विषय में शिकायत कैसे करें' हिंदी में पाने के लिए, अपने स्थानीय NHS बोर्ड को फोन करें (NHS board): 0131 536 3370

Norédami gauti informaciją 'Kaip pateikti skundą dėl NHS darbo' lietuvių kalba, skambinkite į savo vietinę NHS tarybą (NHS board): 0131 5363370

Aby otrzymać broszurę „Składanie skarg na NHS” w języku polskim, prosimy skontaktować się telefonicznie z najbliższą placówką NHS (NHS board) pod numerem 0131 536 3370

Для получения брошюры «Как подать жалобу на NHS» на русском языке позвоните в местное управление Государственной службы здравоохранения (NHS board): 0131 536 3370

Para obtener una copia del folleto 'Cómo presentar una reclamación al NHS' en español, llame a su oficina local del NHS (NHS board): 0131 536 3370

'NHS' کے بارے میں شکایت کیسے کی جائے ' اردو میں حاصل کرنے کیلئے اپنے مقامی این ایچ ایس بورڈ (NHS board) کو 0131 536 9000 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔

www.hris.org.uk