

Making a complaint about an NHS organisation Tips on how write a complaint

Find out which organisation you should compliant to

If you are unsure about this please read our NHS Complaints Guide or contact Healthwatch Coventry on 024 7625 2011.

Who to address your complaint to within the organisation:

As a guide you should address your complaints letter to the following people:

- **GP and dental practices**

If you are complaining about a GP Practice or dentist you should address your letter to the “Complaints Manager” at the particular practice in question.

You can also complaint to NHS England, the body which manages the funding of GPs and dentist and other primary care services by contacting:

Post: NHS England
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT
Tel: 0300 311 2233
Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

- **NHS Trusts of Clinical Commissioning Group**

If your complaint is about a NHS Trust (such as a hospital) or Clinical Commissioning Group (“CCG”), which commissions health services you should address your letter to the Chief Executive of that organisation. Simply writing “Chief Executive” is enough and you do not have to obtain the name of the particular person in question.

Things to say in your letter

The letter should state that it is a “**formal complaint**” and that you wish the complaint to be investigated under the “**NHS Complaints Procedure**”.

You should request that the organisation in question **acknowledges** that your letter has been received within 3 working days of it having received your complaint.

Response times

You should have a full response from a GP within 10 days and from a Trust or CCG within 25 days. If they cannot provide a full response within that timescale they should write to you explaining why and the time frame they will be working to. You can send further letters requesting an update if the suggested timescales are not met. You could also

telephone the organisation in order to chase a response once the timescales set out above have elapsed.

Keep a log - it is a good idea to:

- Create an accurate record of events, detailing who you spoke to, what was said, when this happened etc.
- Keep copies of letters and emails you send and receive and keep a note of phone calls you make

When setting out your complaint you should:

- Be as brief and concise as you can and use straightforward language and short sentences
- Try to address only one point at a time and try to avoid repetition in your letter by addressing each issue once if possible;
- Deal with the most important points of your complaint first and resist the temptation to write a long letter about every issue that you have rather than those most important to you;
- How you feel about things will always be a big part of any complaint, however, when you set out how you feel and the reasons as to why you feel let down or upset, try to avoid using hostile, aggressive or accusatory language;
- Bear in mind what it you want to achieve by your complaint. If you make your complaint in robust yet polite terms there is a greater likelihood that the organisation will respond more positively;
- If a complaint is very long with lots of dates and events try and provide a list or chronology of those dates and events or a log sheet with details of where and when each event occurred. This will help the person dealing with your complaint to understand it better;
- If you have documents that you want to rely on make sure you send copies. Never send the originals;
- Ensure that you have a record that your complaint was sent by sending it by recorded or guaranteed delivery;
- You can 'CC' your local Healthwatch into letters and emails you send about your complaint so that we get a copy and the organisation knows we have received it.

This information sheet is a guide only, you can choose to write your letter of complaint how you wish.

Healthwatch Coventry NHS Complaints Advocacy is delivered by Coventry Law Centre as part of Healthwatch Coventry.