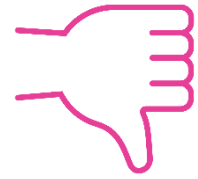


How can I raise concerns about Health services?

- The process for raising concerns or making a complaint depends on the service(s) you are having issues with.
- We have a separate sheet for [GP services](#).
- Some people may be able to get help making a complaint – this is called [advocacy](#).



We would advise you to follow the service provider's complaints procedure in the first instance.

Complaining about Hospital Services

Hospitals and some other services will have their own service to support patients. This is usually called PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service), or they may call it a Patient Experience Team or something similar. This is a service where you can raise concerns or complaints or give compliments.



Each hospital/service may have its own PALS, or more commonly, the service will be provided by the NHS Trust which provides the service. We have a [sheet with contact details for PALS](#) for some local hospitals and other services in Staffordshire. You can also [search for PALS by postcode here](#).

PALS is the best place to start if you are unhappy with your treatment. There may also be a separate complaints team, if it is necessary to escalate your concerns. When you contact PALS, you should receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 3 working days. If you are making contact on behalf of somebody else, you may need to gain their written consent, unless you have Lasting Power of Attorney on health matters.

General Advice about Making a Complaint

This useful guidance is provided by NHS England:

- Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of an incident or of it coming to your attention.
- This time limit can be extended provided you have good reasons for not making the complaint sooner and it's possible to complete a fair investigation.
- This will be a decision taken by the complaints manager in discussion with you.

- You can make a complaint verbally, in writing or by email. If you make your complaint verbally, a record of your complaint will be made, and you'll be provided with a written copy.
- If you're complaining on behalf of someone else, include their written consent with your letter (if you're making your complaint in writing) as this will speed up the process.
- If the person cannot give their consent, for example, if they have died or lack mental capacity, or are a child who cannot complain for themselves, you may be able to complain for them.

MIND also has a useful overview of [how to complain about health or social care](#) on their website.

If the initial outcome is unsatisfactory – the Ombudsman

If you are unhappy with the resolution or response once the PALS/Complaints team have investigated, you may wish to contact the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman.

There are currently long waiting times for this service. Find out if they can help you using their '[easy complaint checker](#)' and see what the current waiting times are [their website](#).

We would like to emphasize these comments on their website:

"As we are the final stage for unresolved complaints, we usually expect you to complain to the organisation you are unhappy with first. This is so that it has the chance to look into your concerns and, where needed, put things right for you."

Email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk