



# Making a complaint to the NHS in the North East and North Cumbria

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We welcome feedback about NHS services, both positive and negative. If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you, a relative or someone you care for has received from your local NHS, you have the right to make a complaint, have it looked into and get a response. Within the NHS we aim to make sure all complaints are handled well and that appropriate action is taken in order to try and resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction.

You can make your complaint in writing, by email, via a complaint form or verbally.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt and fully investigated in a manner that is fair both to you and the staff involved. If failings are identified during the investigation, these will help us to improve the quality of local health services. You will receive a written response to your complaint which will include information on the service improvements we have identified.

It should be noted that complaints relating to some types of funding decisions and eligibility criteria are not routinely handled via the complaints process; the Complaints Team can provide advice on the process to follow.

Face to face meetings can be arranged by appointment with the NECS Complaints Team.

Care will not be compromised as a result of raising a complaint/concern.

Information about complaints is available in other languages and formats upon request.

## Where do I send my complaint?

This will depend on the service your complaint is about.

### **A service provided by a doctor, dentist, pharmacist or optometrist**

Please contact the provider directly in the first instance (eg GP practice). If you would prefer not to approach the provider about the complaint, please contact:

Email: [necsu.pccomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.pccomplaints@nhs.net)

Tel: 0191 512 8277

Post: Primary Care Complaints Team, North East and North Cumbria ICB, Riverside House, Goldcrest Way, Newburn Riverside Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NY

### **The commissioning of a service by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB)**

Please contact the NECS Complaints Team – details are provided below.

### **A service provided by NECS**

Please contact the NECS Complaints Team - details are provided below.

### **Other NHS services**

If you have a concern, complaint or compliment about the provider of NHS services such as a hospital, mental health service, urgent care service, ambulance service or community service, please contact the provider directly in the first instance. If you would prefer not to approach the provider about the complaint, then please contact the ICB as below, but please note that the ICB will still need to contact the provider to investigate your complaint.

Email: [necsu.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.complaints@nhs.net)

Tel: 0191 374 4218

Post: Complaints Team, North of England Commissioning Support Unit, John Snow House, University Science Park, Durham, DH1 3YG

The ICB/NECS will retain personal information for the purposes of a complaint investigation only. To help us make improvements to the services you receive, anonymous information about your complaint may be shared as part of our reporting process. Should you have any concerns about these arrangements please contact us.

## Complaining to the commissioner of an NHS service

In the majority of cases, complaints about the care you have received can be handled by the provider of that care. However, you are also entitled to complain to the commissioner of these services if that is your preference.

Complaining to the commissioner may be the right option if you are not comfortable complaining directly to your healthcare provider. However, the healthcare provider will normally be given the opportunity to investigate and respond to your complaint directly. In cases where the NENC ICB is the commissioner, the provider will be asked to share a copy of the complaint response with the ICB for monitoring purposes.

**Please note, if you have already complained to your healthcare provider, the commissioner will not be able to re-investigate the same concerns.** If you remain unhappy following a response to your complaint, you should contact either your healthcare provider or the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO), see below for more information about the PHSO.

## Can my issue be resolved without formally complaining?

You can raise your concerns immediately by speaking with the staff involved. This might give you the response you require without having to take the matter further. You can also contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who can help in many ways including helping to resolve concerns or problems about services and providing advice on the complaints process.

## Who can complain?

Anyone can complain about NHS services or treatment they have received or if they have been affected by the actions or decisions of an NHS organisation or primary care practitioner. If you are unable to complain yourself, someone can act on your behalf with your consent.

## When should I make a complaint?

A complaint should be made within 12 months from the date the issue occurred or when it came to your attention. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration.

## What happens if my complaint involves a number of organisations?

If your complaint involves more than one NHS organisation or the NHS and social care (provided by the local authority), you can make your complaint to just one of the organisations involved and they will liaise with the other organisations and arrange for you to receive a single, coordinated response.

## Who can help me make a complaint?

Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) services can guide and support you through the complaints process. They can help you put your complaint in writing and attend meetings with you; however, the ICA Team does not investigate complaints.

### **Darlington, Durham, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Redcar and Cleveland and South Tyneside**

Carers Federation

Telephone: 0808 802 3000

Email: [ica@carersfederation.co.uk](mailto:ica@carersfederation.co.uk)

### **Gateshead**

Your Voice Counts

Tel: 0800 048 7856

Email: [nhsadvocacy@yvc.org.uk](mailto:nhsadvocacy@yvc.org.uk)

### **North Cumbria**

Best Life Advocacy

Telephone: 0300 303 8037

Email: [admin@peoplefirstcumbria.co.uk](mailto:admin@peoplefirstcumbria.co.uk)

### **Northumberland**

VoiceAbility

Telephone: 0300 303 1660

Email: [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

### **Stockton**

Stockton ICA

Telephone: 0808 1729553

Email: [sica@pcp.uk.net](mailto:sica@pcp.uk.net)

### **Sunderland**

Voiceability

Telephone: 0300 3031660

Email: [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

## What happens if I am unhappy with the response?

If you remain unhappy with how your complaint has been handled following the conclusion of local resolution, you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) to review your complaint. You can contact the PHSO at the address below:

PHSO, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP, Tel: 0345 015 4033

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

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