

Leeds Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Complaint Letter Guide

Who do I complain to?

If you want to complain about your hospital, ambulance service or most community healthcare contact the **Chief Executive of the NHS Trust**. (See our [Useful Contacts Guide](#))

For complaints about primary care and independent providers such as your GP, dentist, optician, pharmacist, or other independent NHS contractor you have two options:

(a) You can complain directly to the NHS organisation by contacting the person in charge of complaints. In most GP and dental practices, this will be the practice manager.

Or

(b) You can complain to the Commissioner. (The commissioner is the organisation that asks the practice to provide NHS services)

If you choose Option (a) and you are not satisfied with the response you cannot then raise the issue with the commissioner. The next stage of the complaints procedure will be to contact the Health Service Ombudsman.

NHS England commissions Primary Care Services such as GPs, Dentists, pharmacies and some other community care however the local Clinical Commissioning Groups also commission some services.

If your complaint concerns more than one NHS organisation you only need to complain to one of the organisations. They should then contact the other services involved and work together to investigate the complaint and provide one co-ordinated response.

If you are not clear where to send your complaint, ask for advice from:

- *the Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) or the Patient Relations Team in larger organisations such as hospitals.*
- *NHS England on 0300 311 2233 for Primary Care Services*
- *The Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) can be contacted on 0800 052 5270*

Template and Sample Letters

On the next page you will find a sample letter so that you have an example of a complaint letter which you may find useful.

There is also a template letter which you may also find useful.

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Sample Letter

1 Any Street
Any town
AB1 2CD

NHS England **OR** Mr A.N. Other
PO Box 16738 Practice Manager
Redditch Main Surgery
Worcestershire Main Road
B97 9PT Main Town
MA1 3CD

1st June 2013

Dear Sir or Madam **OR** Dear Mr Other,

RE: Joe Bloggs DOB 29/2/1948

I am writing to make a complaint about the standard of care and treatment provided by my GP, Dr Doctor, at Main Surgery, Main Road, Main Town.

On 2nd April I had an appointment to see Dr Doctor and I explained that I had been suffering from severe stomach pain for several weeks. The GP carried out a brief examination and said there was nothing to worry about and told me to take some paracetamol. The pain carried on and didn't get better when I took the paracetamol so I made another appointment to see my GP. Again, after a very short examination I was prescribed some stronger pain relief and told to take this as required.

The next day I was taken into hospital with appendicitis and needed to have an emergency operation to remove my appendix. I have since been told by the Consultant at the hospital that I am fortunate the appendix had not burst. I believe that if the GP had taken my symptoms more seriously, this situation could have been avoided.

I would like an investigation to be carried out and for a response to be provided regarding the following concerns:

1. Why weren't my symptoms taken more seriously by the GP?
2. Why did the GP just tell me to take pain relief for the pain, at both appointments when it was clear that I was in agony?
3. I would like the GP to explain why he didn't refer me to hospital for more tests?

If you require any further information or need to update me on the progress of my complaint investigation, please contact me on 1234 567 8901 or at my address above or by email at joe1@internetprovider.com

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If you feel that having a meeting would be a better way to resolve my concerns, I would be happy to do this.

I would like an explanation about why my GP acted the way he did and an apology from him for not diagnosing my appendicitis. I would also like to know if any changes have been made to stop this happening to anybody else

I would like you to carry out a full investigation into my complaint and provide a response in accordance with the NHS Complaints Procedure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully (for NHS England)

Joe Bloggs

OR

Yours sincerely (for the practice manager)

Joe Bloggs

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Template Letter

Your full address

Private & Confidential

Name of Chief Executive or Practice Manager or Commissioner

Full NHS organisation name

NHS organisation address

[DATE]

Dear Name of Chief Executive or Practice Manager,

Re: Name of Patient and Date of Birth (e.g. Mr Joe Bloggs DOB 29/02/1948)

I am writing to make a complaint about my NHS care or treatment at [NHS Organisation]

OR

I am writing on behalf of my Sister/Mother/Friend/Son to make a complaint about their NHS Care or Treatment at [NHS Organisation]. I enclose their written agreement to act on their behalf. [Make sure to include this on a separate sheet or at the bottom of your letter. If the patient is unable to give consent because they are too young, lacking mental capacity or deceased, then you should explain this here.]

Insert details about the complaint.

A brief description of what happened, any staff present or other important details will really help in the investigation of your complaint. This should form a couple of paragraphs but might be more depending on your complaint and what happened.

Please try and include (where possible):

- The name of the NHS organisation and other details if appropriate such as the department, or the ward.
- The dates (if known) for appointments / admission/discharge/ of the incident's
- The names of staff members/nurses/doctors if known.

If you would like answers to any specific questions it's a good idea to put them in your letter and to number them, an example is below.

I would like a full investigation to be carried out and for a response to be provided answering the following concerns:

1. *Why was I not informed at the time of the procedure that there had been a problem with some of the equipment?*
2. *Why wasn't my Mother given access to any water during her stay in recovery?*

If you require any further information or need to update me on the progress of my complaint, please contact me *on telephone number* (if you are happy for someone to call you) or at my address above *or by email* (insert email address).

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If you feel that having a meeting would be a better way to resolve my concerns, I would be happy to do this. (include this sentence if you would be happy to attend a meeting)

I would like (state what you would like to achieve as a result of making the complaint. e.g. to receive an apology/explanation for the events which happened and/or for the service to be improved so that this doesn't happen again.)

I would like you to carry out a full investigation into my complaint and provide a response in accordance with the NHS Complaints Procedure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Your name