

# Guide to making a complaint to the NHS



Every NHS organisation has a complaints procedure and you, as the patient, have the right to have your complaint investigated fully. If you want to make a complaint about the treatment you've received from the NHS, where do you start?

## How to make your complaint

There are several ways in which you can complain about the treatment you've received from your healthcare provider.

Firstly you can talk directly to the clinicians involved in your care or, if your complaint involves NHS hospital treatment, you can contact your hospital's Patient Advice & Liaison Services (PALS).

PALS won't take part in the formal NHS complaints procedure; however they will liaise with the relevant clinicians and management on your behalf.

You can also write to the Complaints Manager at the hospital trust or GP practice concerned.

If you're unsure of who has provided the NHS service you've received, you should write to your local Primary Care Trust (PCT) as they commission health services in your area.

## How long do you have to complain?

Your complaint should be made within 12 months of the event taking place. Some healthcare providers will respond to a complaint made after this time, but they are under no obligation to do so.

After submitting your complaint, you should expect to receive a letter of acknowledgment which sets out the time frame for investigation of your concerns.

You may also be offered a meeting with the trust or GP practice, but choosing to accept this offer is very much your decision. If you're not satisfied with the outcome of the initial local complaints procedure, you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman. They are independent of the NHS and government and can be contacted on **0345 015 4033**.

## Helping you with your complaint

If you've suffered an injury (physical, psychological or both) as a result of medical treatment that you've received, you may be able to make a claim for clinical negligence. If you've already made a complaint, or you're in the process of doing so, you don't need to wait until it's been dealt with before contacting us.

There are strict time limits involved in bringing a claim, and your complaint may take up to six months to reach resolution. Further delays would be expected if you were to take your complaint to the Ombudsman.

If you are considering making a claim for compensation, contact us as soon as possible. We'll arrange an initial consultation where we'll provide feedback and discuss ways to fund your negligence claim. This interview can be conducted over the telephone or at one of our Bristol and South Gloucestershire offices.

Contact us on **0117 325 2929** or fill out our online enquiry form at **[barcankirby.co.uk](http://barcankirby.co.uk)**.

**BEDMINSTER** 25 North St, Bristol BS3 1EN  
**BISHOPSTON** 60 Gloucester Rd, Bristol BS7 8BH  
**BRISTOL CITY CENTRE** Prince House, Bristol BS1 4PS

**KINGSWOOD** 111/117 Regent St, Bristol BS15 8LJ  
**THORNBURY** 36 High St, Thornbury BS35 2AJ

**Barcan+Kirby**

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