

MAKING COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS:

**A guide for patients whose care is being
funded by the NHS**

Introduction

HCA Healthcare UK is committed to delivering safe, high-quality healthcare. We will do our best to ensure the time you spend in our hospitals is as comfortable as possible and to provide you with excellent personal and professional care, but there may be times when your expectations are not met. Please do highlight any concerns as soon as they arise to a member of staff, rather than waiting, so that we can try and resolve these in a timely fashion.

NHS Funded Care – Raising an issue or concern

If the NHS has funded your care at a HCA UK hospital, HCA UK is responsible for the quality of this care. If you are unhappy about the care and treatment you have received, you may make a complaint to either ourselves as outlined below, or to your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). (Please click [here](#) or see NHS Choices website to find details of CCGs). We will work together to resolve your complaint. The hospital can also provide the relevant address on request.

On your discharge from hospital

If you have concerns after your discharge from hospital, please write to the hospital's Chief Executive Officer of the relevant HCA UK facility. The hospital's address details can be found on the HCA UK website.

The Complaints Process

Any complaint that we receive is treated in confidence. We undertake to investigate all complaints courteously and sympathetically and to provide a response within recognised timelines.

What are the first steps?

Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of an incident or of the matter coming to your attention. This time limit can sometimes be extended as long as it is still possible to investigate your complaint.

All complaints are taken seriously and are handled openly and honestly in a bid to be fair to all concerned and to conclude matters to the satisfaction of all parties as soon as practically possible. All documentation will be forwarded to the hospital's manager handling your complaint.

How do I make a written complaint?

It is helpful to put all formal complaints in writing.

Your letter should include:

- Who or what has caused your concerns
- Where and when the events took place
- What action you have already taken, if any
- What outcome you want from your complaint.

The hospital's Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge your complaint letter within three working days of receipt, unless a full reply can be sent within five working days of receiving it.

What are the Timeframes for investigation?

You should be offered a discussion about the handling of your complaint, and if you accept, the discussion will agree a period within which a response to your complaint is likely to be sent.

There's no set timeframe, and this will depend on the nature of your complaint. If, in the end, the response is delayed for any reason, you should be kept informed. If you made a complaint but do not receive a response or

decision for more than 6 months, you should be told the reason for the delay. Once your complaint has been investigated, you'll receive a written response.

The response should set out the findings and, where appropriate, provide apologies and information about what's being done as a result of your complaint. It should also include information about how the complaint has

been handled and details of your right to take your complaint to the ombudsman.

The NHS Contract also requires us to provide you with details on how to contact your Local Healthwatch; your legal rights under the NHS Constitution, and on how you can access independent support to help make a complaint:

- You can access your [local 'Healthwatch'](#) who can provide information about making a complaint: see <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-local-healthwatch/list> or call Healthwatch England on 03000 68 3000.
- You can contact [Citizens Advice](#) by calling 0344 411 1444.
- You can also contact the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), run by POhWER, if you need help and support through the complaints process. POhWER can be contacted as follows:
Telephone: 0300 456 2370
Minicom: 0300 456 2364
By text: Send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025
Email: LondonHCAS@pohwer.net or <https://www.pohwer.net/>
Skype: pohwer.advocacy (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)
By post: POhWER, PO Box 14043, Birmingham B6 9BL
Website: <https://nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org/>

The [NHS Constitution](#) sets out your rights as a patient, and explains the commitments the NHS has made to providing you with a high-quality service. Organisations providing NHS care must take account of the NHS Constitution when treating you, so you may find it helpful to refer to it if you are thinking about making a complaint to us.

What happens if I am not happy with the response?

If you have exhausted the Hospital local process and continue to remain dissatisfied with how your concern / complaint has been handled, you may raise your concerns with The Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) (*) who can be contacted in the following ways:

- Visiting - www.ombudsman.org.uk
- Telephoning the PHSO complaints helpline on 0345 015 4033 (Monday to Thursday 8-30am to 5-00pm; Friday 8.30am – 12pm)

- Emailing - phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
- Writing to:
The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP.

Useful information - refer to the PHSO - 'What happens when we receive your complaint' video via [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

Coronavirus (COVID19)

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, there may be a delay in us investigating any new or existing complaints. This enables our clinical staff, to focus on front line patient care. It also enables our complaints teams to provide vital support to frontline services and the NHS at this challenging time.

We will continue to review and acknowledge all new complaints and will act upon any concerns about patient safety or safeguarding.

You will be notified that your complaint investigation is on hold. We will resume our complaints service as soon as possible.

In the meantime, thank you for your patience and understanding.

TO NOTE*:

Coronavirus (COVID19) *From Thursday 26 March the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) have decided that they should not place additional burdens on the NHS at this time. Therefore, they will not be accepting new health service complaints nor progressing existing ones where this requires contact with the NHS. They will keep the situation under close and regular review.*