



Writing and sending an NHS Complaint Letter

You might have already thought about the issues you want to include in your letter. The letter should clearly outline your complaint and should ask for it to be investigated under the NHS Complaints Procedure.

Below are some tips for putting your letter together:

- Make it clear who the complaint is about – use the full name of the patient, and make sure you insert their date of birth, so they can be easily identified.
- Try to keep your letter concise and to the point – sometimes issues can get lost in a long account which describes what happened in great detail.
- If your complaint spans many months or needs a lot of detail, perhaps use a time line, or diary of events to structure your letter, and list your questions and issues separately.
- Be factual and avoid aggressive language or comments which could be classed as offensive. Although you may have strong feelings it is important to recognise that the person receiving your letter often won't have been involved in the issue you are raising and may be as keen as you to resolve any problems.
- Try to avoid repeating yourself - make your point and then move on to the next issue.
- You could group issues together by theme to organise your letter – e.g. Medication, Cleanliness, Attitude, Discharge
- Ask definite questions and for the organisation to investigate specific issues or episodes.

Complaints about more than one NHS body

If your complaint relates to more than one NHS organisation, you can either send separate complaints to the different organisations or, if you wish, you can send all your concerns in one letter.

If you decide to send one letter, send your letter to one NHS organisation and ask them to co-operate to provide a co-ordinated response with the others involved. They should then communicate with the other services concerned with your complaint, investigate and provide a combined response.

What will happen next?

You should receive an acknowledgement of your complaint either verbally or in writing within 3-5 working days of making your complaint. Sometimes it may be possible to resolve your concerns immediately, but if not, the NHS organisation should provide you with a timeframe of how long they expect their investigations to take.

For some guidance about how to set out your letter of complaint, you can use our 'NHS Complaint Letter template' which can be found on our website: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/complaints

How can we help with your letter?

If you are capable of writing your own letters, but unsure if what you have written is correct, this checklist might help:

- Is it clear what has happened?
- It is clear why you are unhappy?
- If you are asking for more information, are you clear about what you're asking for?
- Have you said how you think this can be resolved?
- Have you included contact details on so they know how to get in touch with you if they need more information?

If you are less confident at writing letters, please have a look at [our letter template](#). If you are unable to write your letter:

- We can help you 'tell your story' by writing it down in a way that is logical and clear.
- We can help you write down what you would like to happen as a result of making your complaint

How can you help us to help you?

If we are helping you with your NHS Complaint, it is really helpful if you can send us copies of any letters you send and receive that relate to your complaint. We can then keep an up to date file and if you come back for further help we can prepare more effectively.



healthwatch
Liverpool

Contact us

Call 0300 7777 007

Text / WhatsApp: 07842 552 878

Email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

Write: 151 Dale Street, L2 2AH

www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/complaints