



# Your 'Good-to-Know' guide on **NHS Complaints Advocacy**



# What is independent advocacy?

Advocacy is about speaking up. It is about having the right information, at the right time to help you speak up for yourself. Sometimes people need help from advocates to speak up.

Independent Advocacy is when people get support from people who are independent from all health and social care services. These people are called Independent Advocates.

Independent Advocates can help you to:

- Understand information and your rights
- Explore your options and choices
- Tell people what is important to you
- Access other services that may be able to help you.

# What is Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy?

Independent NHS Complaints advocacy supports people to raise concerns and complaints about NHS care and treatment.

The Government recognises that the NHS don't always get things right and it can be challenging for people to raise concerns and complaints. It is your right to have support from an Independent NHS Complaints Advocate if you are unhappy about any NHS care or treatment you have received.

Independent Advocates work alongside people to help them raise their own complaint. We do not investigate your complaint but can help you to navigate the complaints process.

**NHS Complaints Advocacy is free and fully independent.**

# Eligibility checker

## Who is it for?

Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy is available for anyone 16 years or over who would like to make a complaint about NHS funded care or treatment.

There are lots of Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy services across England.

The Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy service that can support you is the one in your local authority area where you live, even if you had your NHS care or treatment outside of your local area.

# How it helps

**If you have received treatment or care which you are unhappy about and you would like to raise a concern or complaint, we can help you to:**

- Feel confident to raise your concern or complaint
- Understand the NHS complaints process
- Know who to raise your complaint to
- Explore your rights and options at every stage to help you decide what to do
- Access self-help information
- Find out about other services or organisations that can help
- Compile and submit your complaint.

# Raising a complaint

## Things to consider

### 1. What do you want to complain about?

It's important to be clear what you want to complain about. This can be any aspect of the NHS care and services that you have received.

### 2. What do you want to achieve?

Your complaint is more likely to be dealt with smoothly if you can be clear about your aims. Think about what is important to you. It can be helpful to list any questions you would like to ask, or any pieces of information you need to know. You may feel you would like an apology or a general explanation. You may feel it is important that your complaint results in improvements to services and avoids the same thing happening again.

We can discuss all of your options with you.

### **3. Do you want to raise your concerns more informally first?**

Concerns can sometimes be put right once you explain the problem before making a formal complaint. If you feel able to, you can speak to a member of staff who is directly involved. This is often the quickest way to put things right and stop things getting worse.

### **4. Deciding whether to go ahead**

You have a right to make an NHS complaint if you are dissatisfied. It is very common for people to think about whether they should make a complaint. Here are some things you may wish to consider:

- Can you resolve the problem by speaking to a member of staff directly?
- What are the positives and negatives of making a complaint?
- Do you need any more information to support you to make a complaint?  
e.g. copies of health records.

# Getting support and Frequently Asked Questions

If you have questions about Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy, take a look at the **Frequently Asked Questions** on our website, or get in touch.

If you would like our support, you can refer yourself by calling us or completing our online referral for: **[wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/referral/](https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/referral/)**



You can call us **0300 303 8037**



Or email **[bestlife@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](mailto:bestlife@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)**



Or live chat **[wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)**

If you need this information in a different format please let us know.



## We are a charity

People First Independent Advocacy are  
a Registered Charity. No 11844767



**[wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)**