

Free information and support for people making an NHS complaint

A guide for people who handle complaints about NHS services

Whenever you're handling an NHS complaint, please make sure that the person knows about the free self-help resources and advocacy support they can get from VoiceAbility.

What we offer

Self-help toolkit

On the webpages at voiceability.org/nhscomplaints we offer information to help people make a complaint independently. Our toolkit is also available in print or PDF, in standard and Easy Read formats. To get a copy, call us on 0300 303 1600 or email helpline@voiceability.org with the name and address of the person who'll be making the complaint.

On request, we can also send these resources:

- a guide and template for writing a complaint letter
- a log sheet for tracking the progress of a complaint
- a consent form for complaining on behalf of someone else

NHS complaints advocacy

If someone needs help at any point in the complaints process, they have the right to free and confidential support from an independent advocate.

An advocate can help people to:

- know and access their rights when making a complaint
- identify the issues they want to complain about
- work out what they want to achieve from making their complaint
- write a complaint letter and send it to the right people
- understand the response they get and what to do next
- prepare for local resolution meetings, and accompany them if needed
- take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

An advocate cannot make a complaint on someone's behalf, but will empower the person to do as much as they can independently. Support from an advocate can help people achieve a successful local resolution.

If you think advocacy would help someone you're supporting, you can signpost them to our webpages at voiceability.org/nhsca.

You can refer someone for NHS complaints advocacy if you have their permission, or they can refer themselves, in the following ways:

Online referral form: voiceability.org/make-a-referral

Freephone: 0300 303 1660

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

If you're unsure whether to refer, contact us on 0300 303 1660.

Use our leaflet to spread the word

We have a leaflet you can give people to help make them aware of advocacy and of our toolkit. This is available in standard or Easy Read PDF at voiceability.org/nhsca or you can contact helpline@voiceability.org to request printed copies.

About us

We've been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for almost 40 years. We're an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.