

Our Services

Clinical Negligence

How to complain about a Healthcare Professional

You should follow this route if you do not wish to apply for financial compensation, but do want to make a complaint.

Making a complaint may help you to get an explanation of what happened and an apology. It can also help you to access details of what is happening to stop an error occurring again.

If you have had treatment on the NHS you can use the NHS Complaints Procedure to make a complaint. There are slight differences in the procedures in England and Wales. It is not normally possible to get financial compensation by making a complaint.

Applying for Legal Aid?

If you want to apply for Legal Aid to investigate a legal case you are expected to make a complaint first in most cases. You should not mention legal action while you are making your complaint as otherwise your complaint will not be investigated.

Making a complaint

A complaint should normally be made within six months of the treatment that you are complaining about. After this time it is still worth trying to make a complaint as the hospital/healthcare professional may still agree to deal with it.

To start your complaint you need to write to the complaints manager at the hospital or in other cases to the healthcare professional such as your GP. They have to confirm that they have received your

letter and to give you a full reply. Sometimes you will be offered a meeting to discuss your complaint. There are three different stages to the Complaints Procedure:-

1. Local Resolution
2. Independent Professional Review/
Review by the Healthcare Commission
3. Applying to the Ombudsman.

You have to go through each stage in turn. If you are applying for Legal Aid we can apply for this once you have completed the first stage in most cases. If you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with properly you can then ask for an Independent Professional Review (Wales) or a review by the Healthcare Commission (England). If you cannot get a review or are unhappy with the results of the review, then your last option is to ask the Ombudsman to look at your complaint.

Complaining to Professional Bodies

In some cases you may also want to complain to the professional body of the healthcare professional. There are different organisations for different professions e.g. The General Medical Council which deals with doctors. You will find some helpful links overleaf.

Help with making a complaint

Community Health Council

In Wales you can approach your local Community Health Council for help and advice. For further information visit www.patienthelp.wales.nhs.uk or contact the Wales Board on 0845 644 7814 that can put you in touch with your local team.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

In England you need to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at your local hospital if the complaint is about that hospital.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service

You can also contact the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) who support patients and their carers wishing to pursue a complaint about their NHS treatment or care. For further information contact ICAS North West on 0845 120 3735.

Action against Medical Accidents

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) is a national charity campaigning against medical accidents and they can also offer advice and information. Visit www.avma.org.uk or call 0845 123 2352 for more information.

Speedy Resolution Scheme

There is a special scheme in Wales for more minor cases where it is possible to claim compensation and to try to get an apology. In cases where the hospital accepts that it is at fault they will offer an apology as well as compensation. In all cases they will also look at whether lessons can be learned.

For more information see: www.wales.gov.uk
