

Be brief

- try to keep your complaint to no more than two pages
- be careful not to lose your main points in a long letter
- if the complaint is long and complex, attach a log sheet or diary of events with details.

Be clear and straightforward

- use short sentences
- don't be afraid to say what has upset you
- avoid aggressive or accusing language
- try not to repeat yourself

Be constructive

- your complaint is an opportunity to improve things
- put your concerns politely but firmly
- explain what you would like to achieve as a result of your complaint, e.g. an apology, an explanation, a service improvement, any other remedy
- take the opportunity to say what / who was good in your experience, if you wish to.

Keep copies

- keep a copy of all letters sent and received in date order
- send photocopies of documents, not originals
- keep the original documents in your possession

Make sure your letter is received

- you may wish to send it by guaranteed or recorded delivery

What happens next?

NHS policy says that you should receive a letter of acknowledgement within three working days from receipt of your letter of complaint. The NHS should contact you to discuss your complaint and arrange a plan to resolve your concerns with you. This means that they will discuss how best to resolve your concerns and what you hope to achieve from raising them.

They should also agree with you a timescale for resolving the issues and keep you informed of progress. The suggested timescales can be influenced by things like how many staff they need to speak to, how easy it is for them to access your medical records and if other NHS organisations are involved in your complaint.

If there is a problem in keeping to this timescale, they should contact you before it expires to agree an amended timescale.

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Name (if known)

The Complaints Manager

Name of organisation

Address

Postcode

Your address

Example Road

Example Town

EX1 2EX

01234 56789

example@exampleemail.com

Date

Dear *Name (if known)* OR Dear Sir/Madam (*if name not known*)

Ref: NHS Complaint

I am writing to complain about the treatment I received from *name(s) of staff* at *place where incident happened* on *date of incident/period of treatment*.

OR (*if you are acting on behalf of the patient*)

I am writing on behalf of *insert patient name* and I enclose their written agreement to act on their behalf. *If the patient is unable to give consent, for example, if they are too young, ill or deceased, then you should explain this.*

Describe:

- *What happened*
- *When it happened*
- *Where it happened*

If you have a log or list of events, you can attach this as a separate sheet and refer to it here. Explain what, if anything, you have already done to try and resolve matters.

Then say:

I would like the following points addressed in the response to this complaint:

- *Put the most important matters first*
- *Explain why you are not satisfied*
- *Number or bullet your points*
- *Ask the specific questions you would like answers to*

Then say what you want to achieve as a result of your complaint. For example:

- *An explanation of what happened*
- *An apology*
- *Action to remedy the problem you experienced*
- *Action to ensure the same thing doesn't happen to someone else.*

I would like you to carry out a full investigation into my concerns and provide a response in line with the NHS Complaints Procedure. I look forward to receiving your acknowledgement of this letter.

Yours sincerely (*if name known*) OR Yours faithfully (*if addressed Dear Sir/Madam*)

Your signature

Your name