



How to make a complaint factsheet

The purpose of this factsheet is to inform the reader of the options available to them should they need to make a complaint or provide feedback about NHS health services, Adult Social Care services, private healthcare services, and independent care providers. The factsheet also signposts the reader to the Department of Work and Pensions for benefit appeals and complaints, and to the Citizens Advice Bureau for general consumer complaints and advice about energy provider complaints. The factsheet also contains information about further information services.

Most agencies have a complaints procedure; written advice regarding the way that complaints should be handled, and the time scales within which you can expect action. If you have an issue or complaint that you feel you would like to raise, speak to someone close to the cause of the problem if possible: a doctor, practice manager, care manager for example. This informal method may be the most effective way in some circumstances. However, if this does not resolve the problem, listed below are the means through which complaints can be made for Health Services, Adult Social Services, the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), and Consumer Complaints.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

On 1st April 2013 local GPs joined together to form Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to take charge of how your local health services are run. The CCGs are responsible for planning and funding most of your local health services. CCGs are not responsible for primary care services, such as some of the services you receive from your GP, dentist, pharmacist or optometrist. This is now the responsibility of NHS England.



COMPLAIN ABOUT YOUR GP, DENTIST, PHARMACIST, OR OPTOMETRIST

If you wish to make a comment or complaint about your GP, dentist, pharmacist or optometrist your first option is to approach them directly to see if the situation can be resolved. Contact:

- *your GP surgery's Practice Manager who can provide advice and information to help you sort queries quickly and easily*
- *Dentists, pharmacists and optometrists will also have a similar process in place within their practices ask to speak to their Practice/Service Manager*
- *If you are unhappy with the response or you do not feel your complaint is being dealt with efficiently or properly investigated you can also complain to NHS England at:*

NHS Commissioning Board

PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT
Tel: 0300 311 2233
Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
www.england.nhs.uk

Opening hours: 8am – 6pm – Monday to Friday, excluding English Bank Holidays.

In general, NHS England commissions most primary care services like GP and dental services. CCG, oversee the commissioning of secondary care such as hospital care and some community services.



COMPLAINTS ABOUT HOSPITAL SERVICES - ACCESSING THE NHS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

For first step advice on how to access the NHS complaints procedure contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for the appropriate hospital.

The PALS service is for patients, relatives and friends, carers and visitors and aims to:

- *Advise and support patients, their families and carers*
- *Provide information on the NHS services*
- *Listen to and respond to concerns, suggestions and queries*
- *Influence changes in the service*

Services provided include:

- *Ward and telephone consultation to address queries*
- *Trouble shooting to provide early resolutions to problems and concerns*
- *Supporting patients rights*
- *Provide information and support to access other information including the NHS Complaints Procedure.*
- *Signposting to independent/specialist advocacy services and support groups.*
- *Providing information about any aspect of the Trust's services.*
- *Liaison between professionals for patients*
- *Auditing comments to pick up trends and influence changes required to make improvements.*
- *Supporting patients and public involvement in care.*
- *Raise staff awareness of public concerns and issues.*

PALS does not replace the formal complaints procedure, it is another way of getting your concerns addressed. PALS will not investigate complaints but will inform and support people who wish to use the NHS complaints procedure. You are not obliged to use PALS if you wish to make a formal complaint, you can access the NHS complaints procedure yourself.

To access PALS at Royal Bournemouth Hospital and Christchurch Hospital contact:

PALS Co-ordinator
Royal Bournemouth Hospital

Castle Lane East
Bournemouth, BH7 7DW
Tel: 01202 704886 (confidential answer phone available when office unattended).
Email: pals@rbch.nhs.uk
http://www.rbch.nhs.uk/our_services/support_services/pals.php

To access PALS at Poole Hospital contact:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service
Health Information Centre
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole, BH15 2JB
Tel: 01202 448499 (with confidential answer phone)
Fax: 01202 448363
Email: pals@poole.nhs.uk
http://www.poole.nhs.uk/contact_us/pals.asp

To access PALS at Dorchester County Hospital contact:

PALS, Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust
Williams Avenue
Dorchester, DT1 2JY
Tel: 0800 783 80 58
Email: pals@dchft.nhs.uk
<http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/about/pals.html>

To access PALS at Wareham Hospital contact:

PALS, Wareham Hospital
Streche Road
Wareham, BH20 4QQ
Tel: 01929 552433

To access PALS at Swanage Hospital contact:

PALS Swanage Hospital
Queens Road
Swanage, BH19 2ES
Tel: 01929 422282

To access PALS at St Leonards Hospital contact:

PALS St Leonards Community Hospital
Ringwood Road
St Leonard's
Hants, BH24 2RR
Tel: 01202 584200

To access PALS at Westminster Memorial Hospital, Shaftesbury contact:

Westminster Memorial Hospital
Abbey Walk
Shaftesbury, SP7 8BD
Tel: 01747 851535

To access PALS at Yeatman Memorial Hospital, Sherborne contact:

Yeatman Hospital
Hospital Lane
Sherborne, DT9 3JU
Tel: 01305 361500

Information also available from: <http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints/Pages/NHScomplaints.aspx>



NHS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you are unhappy with the care or treatment you have received or you have been refused treatment for a condition, you have the right to complain.

The NHS Constitution explains patient's rights when it comes to making a complaint. Patients have the right to:

- *have your complaint dealt with efficiently, and properly investigated,*
- *know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint,*
- *take your complaint to the independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman if you're not satisfied with the way the NHS has dealt with your complaint,*
- *make a claim for judicial review if you think you've been directly affected by an unlawful act or decision of an NHS body, and*
- *receive compensation if you've been harmed.*

Patients should complain either to the service that they are unhappy with, or the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) that commissioned the service, or NHS England as soon as possible. Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of the date of the event.

The NHS complaints process has two simple stages:

1. Ask the hospital or trust for a copy of its complaints procedure, which will explain how to proceed. First step will normally be to raise the matter (in writing or by speaking to them) with the practitioner, e.g. the nurse or doctor concerned, or with their organisation, which will have a complaints manager. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can raise the matter with your local Clinical Commissioning Group. This is called local resolution, and most cases are resolved at this stage.
2. If you are still unhappy, you can refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who is independent of the NHS and government. They can be contacted in writing to or by telephoning:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Tel: 0345 015 4033
www.ombudsman.org.uk

Opening hours 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday.



COMPLAINTS ABOUT A MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE WHERE PATIENTS ARE DETAINED UNDER THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

If you wish to complain about the way a member of staff has used their powers under the Mental Health Act, you need to complain to the hospital where you are being detained or the hospital that discharged you before you went on to a guardianship or community treatment order.

You can speak to a Mental Health Act Commissioner when they visit your hospital or area, or contact the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Complaints can be made by anyone – patients, staff or any member of the public. Powers and duties carried out under the Mental Health Act cover a wide range of services, including receiving care while detained in hospital, or while on a guardianship or community treatment order. Contact the CQC on:

CQC Mental Health Act

Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA
Tel: 03000 616161
www.cqc.org.uk



INDEPENDENT ADVICE - HELP WITH NHS COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint about an NHS service such as your GP, Dentist, Optician, Chemist/Pharmacist, Hospital, NHS staff, Ambulance service, or other NHS provider you can take it further with independent advice from Dorset Advocacy – Help with NHS Complaints. This is a free service funded by the Local Authority through the Governments Localism Agenda to fund NHS Complaints Advocacy Services. In Dorset this is known as “Help with NHS Complaints” The service is completely confidential, independent of the NHS, and no private or personal information will be passed on to any other agency without your permission. The service has experienced advocates and caseworkers to help you make a complaint about a service provided by the NHS.

Throughout Dorset the local service is run by:

Dorset Advocacy – Help with NHS Complaints

13-15 Jubilee Court
Paceycombe Way
Dorchester
DT1 3AE
Tel: 0300 343 7000
Email: nhscomplaints@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk
www.dorsetadvocacy.co.uk

Dorset Advocacy – Help with NHS Complaints can:

- *Help you deal with the complaints process*
- *Refer you to other relevant agencies regarding your complaint*
- *Meet you at your home or in a place you feel comfortable*
- *Provide interpreters if you are a new English speaker or communicate differently*
- *Generally support you through the process*

However they cannot:

- *Be involved in any claims for compensation (but can refer you to a relevant agency)*
- *Get a Practitioner ‘struck off’*
- *Be involved in any legal process*

If Dorset Advocacy – Help with NHS Complaints agrees to advocate for you they can:

- *Give you the opportunity to speak confidentially to someone who is independent of the health service*
- *Represent a person's wishes and feelings without bias*
- *Provide information to enable you to make an informed decision on how to proceed*
- *Help you explore your options and the potential outcomes of particular courses of action without bias.*
- *Generally support you through the complaints process by accompanying you to meetings, writing letters, making phone calls etc.*

However Dorset Advocacy – Help with NHS Complaints advocates cannot:

- *Make decisions for you*
- *Proceed with a complaint unless you wish us to*
- *Persuade you to take a certain course of action*
- *Work outside of the NHS complaints procedure*
- *Withhold any information from you*
- *Offer an opinion on how you should proceed*

The service is free to everyone, children as well as adults, family carers as well as patients. Dorset Advocacy can help with any complaint, as long as it relates to a service provided or funded by the National Health Service (NHS) in Dorset.



HEALTHWATCH

Healthwatch is a consumer champion for health and social care which began on 1st April 2013 and has a role at national level as Healthwatch England, and at local level as local Healthwatch organisations. Healthwatch was created to gather and represent the opinions and experiences of the public about health and social care services and issues.

Healthwatch Dorset: is the local Healthwatch for Dorset. It is a Social Enterprise administered by local charity Help & Care, in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Dorset Race Equality Council. Healthwatch Dorset collects the views, opinions, experiences of local people about their health and social care services and gives them a powerful voice both locally and nationally to influence change and the design and development of local services. Healthwatch Dorset represents the views of local people, service users, and carers on the local Health and Wellbeing Boards set up by the local authorities, and provides information and signposting to local health and care services, and reports concerns about health care to Healthwatch England who can then recommend that the Care Quality Commission take action.

How does Healthwatch Dorset work?

People need to feel that their local Healthwatch belongs to and reflects them and their local community. It needs to feel approachable, practical and dynamic and to act on behalf of local people. Healthwatch Dorset do this by:

- *helping you to shape and improve the services you use*
- *engaging with people in your community*
- *being an open organisation who want to make it easy to talk to Healthwatch*
- *being an inclusive organisation encouraging all sectors of the community to join Healthwatch Dorset*
- *informing the community about what Healthwatch are doing and what is happening locally*
- *the local community being able to hold Healthwatch to account*
- *helping to improve local services using the evidence gathered from the community to build a true picture of local services*

Please share your experiences with Healthwatch Dorset by contacting us or using the Speak Out form on their website www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk. If they receive several concerns regarding the same issue they can take these to Service Providers, Commissioners of Services, and also to Healthwatch England who can identify national trends.

The right to complain or give feedback about an unsatisfactory service is a key consumer right. It is one that Healthwatch champions. Their role is to ensure that the voices of consumers and those who use services reach the ears of decision makers – even when those voices have something difficult to say. Although most people have no problems when using health care or social care services, sometimes things can go wrong. This information explains what to do if you, or a member of your family, want to complain about the care that you have received.

Healthwatch Dorset can put people in touch with the right organisation to listen to their concerns, and make sure their voice is heard. They work closely with Dorset Advocacy, who provide help with NHS complaints in Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth. Through their information service (0300 111 0102) they can refer people to their free and independent service that listens,

offers support and representation to people who are unhappy about their experience with the NHS. You may already have started a complaint, or you may just be wondering what to do next; they may be able to help you. Their trained Independent Complaints Information Officers can tell you about the options for taking your complaint forward. If you decide that you want to make a formal complaint, they can help you to set it out clearly and effectively. For more complex complaints they provide Independent Complaints Advocates who offer face to face support. They may attend complaints hearings with you, helping you to prepare and put forward your case.

Contact Healthwatch Dorset with your views or if you wish to become one of their volunteers:

In person: by popping into any Citizens Advice Bureau in Dorset, Bournemouth or Poole.

Telephone on: 0300 111 0102 (calls cost the same as to 01 or 02 numbers).

By email using the Contact Us tab on the website www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk .

Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England uses the evidence that it gathers from local Healthwatch organisations to build a national picture of which issues matter most to health and care users and consumers. They use this evidence to influence those who plan and run services at a national level and have the power to ask the health and social care regulator, the Care Quality Commission, to look at areas where there are special concerns. Healthwatch England is able to work and raise issues at the highest national levels including national bodies, specialist organisations and government ministries.



CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspect hospitals, care homes, dental and GP surgeries, and all other care services in England (including private health and care facilities) to make sure that they provide the public with safe, effective, compassionate and high-quality care. If a facility falls below standard CQC have the authority to ensure that improvements are made. Alongside their enforcement role CQC also register all services that provide health or social care, and work alongside organisations such as Healthwatch, Patient Participation Groups, and government ministries. They do this in the following ways:

- *Setting standards of quality and safety that people have a right to expect whenever they receive care.*
- *Registering care services that meet those standards.*
- *Monitoring, inspecting and regulating care services to make sure that they continue to meet the standards.*
- *Protecting the rights of vulnerable people, including those whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.*
- *Listen to and act on the experiences of the public.*
- *Involve the public and people who receive care in CQC work and work in partnership with other organisations and local groups.*
- *Challenge all providers, with the worst providers getting the most attention.*
- *Make fair and authoritative judgements, supported by the best information and evidence.*
- *Take appropriate action if care services are failing to meet standards.*
- *Carry out in-depth investigations to look at care across the system.*
- *Report on the quality of care services, publishing clear and comprehensive information, including ratings to help people choose care.*

Sharing your experience

If you have experienced poor care or know that poor care is being provided somewhere you can report it to CQC, anonymously if you wish. They also would like to hear about when you feel you have received good care. The feedback provided will help CQC to:

- *Decide when, where and what to inspect*
- *Identify the issues that are important to you*
- *Spot problems or concerns in care*

- *Plan national and local activities, known as reviews and studies that focus on health and social care patterns around the country*
- *Make decisions on whether a service should be able to operate*
- *Monitor services, particularly whether they are meeting the national standards*
- *Look at whether commissioners are referring the correct services to people*

Contact CQC National Customer Services Centre by telephoning: 03000 616161

Fax: 03000 616171

Or visiting www.cqc.org.uk

Office open: Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm.

Or you can write to:

CQC National Customer Services Centre
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Or if you need to visit the London office at:

Care Quality Commission
Finsbury Tower
103 – 105 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8TG



COMPLAINTS ABOUT PRIVATE HEALTHCARE SERVICES

If you have a complaint about a healthcare service you have received through the private sector there are a number of organisations who may be able to help you. Firstly each service should have their own in-house complaints procedure so it is best to bring your concerns to the attention of the service manager, designated person within the practice, or health professional concerned in the first instance.

Most health professionals will also be members of trade or professional organisations who monitor standards within the professions, and you may have the right to report concerns to these organisations. Behind all of these organisations you still have the right to bring your concerns to the attention of the Care Quality Commission. Below are details of some of the organisations that you can raise your concerns about your treatment with, who can offer you advice and guidance through the complaints procedure.

Dental Complaints Service

Stephenson House
2 Cherry Orchard Road
Croydon
CRO 6BA
Tel: 08456 120 540 at local rate (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)

Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk
www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk

Funded by the General Dental Council, the organisation that regulates dental professionals in the UK, this is a free service independent of the NHS or the Government.

Aiming to settle complaints about private dental care fairly, efficiently and quickly, they work with patients and dental professionals to reach a solution that both parties are happy with. The solution may involve remedial treatment, a refund, or a referral to another professional.

They will look into private complaints that are raised within 12 months of the treatment taking place, or within 12 months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about. They cannot deal with a complaint that you have been aware of for over 12 months but have not raised during that time. They do not deal with NHS complaints, concerns about the behaviour or ability of a dental professional (for this you need to contact the General Dental Council), or award compensation.

General Dental Council

37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Tel: 0845 222 4141
Email: information@gdc-uk.org
www.gdc-uk.org

The GDC will take action when a dental professional's behaviour, ability, or health means it is no longer suitable for them to continue working as a dental professional. The types of concern they can investigate include:

- *Very poor treatment*
- *Not having professional indemnity insurance*
- *Cross-infection issues (e.g. dirty equipment)*
- *Being under the influence of drink or drugs*
- *Fraud or theft*

If the situation is serious enough they can limit or remove the dental professional's right to work in the UK.

General Optical Council

41 Harley Street
 London
 W1G 8DJ
 Tel: 020 7580 3898
 Fax: 020 7436 3525
 Email: goc@optical.org
www.optical.org/en/Investigating-complaints/index.cfm

The General Optical Council will investigate complaints about whether an optician is fit to practice. Issues investigated include:

- *Poor professional performance*
- *Physical or mental health problems affecting their work*
- *Inappropriate behaviour*
- *Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work*
- *Fraud or dishonesty*
- *A criminal conviction or caution*
- *A finding by another regulatory body*

Independent Healthcare Advisory Services

Centre Point
 103 New Oxford Street
 London
 WC1A 1DU
 Tel: 020 7379 8598, 020 7379 8586
 Email: info@independenthealthcare.org.uk
www.independenthealthcare.org.uk/independent-healthcare-advisory-services/contact-us

IHAS are able to offer you advice and guidance about how to make a complaint about a private healthcare service you have received or have concerns about. In association with the Patients Association they offer a thorough step-by-step guide to your complaints process. They are able to point you in the direction of organisations such as:

- *Independent Doctors Federation – www.idf.uk.net*

- *Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service – a membership organisation that private hospitals, clinics and practices subscribe to and can display the ISCAS logo, who operate a Code of Practice with a progressive three stage complaints procedure.*

Optical Consumer Complaints Service

PO Box 219

Petersfield

GU32 9BY

Tel: 0844 800 5071

Fax: 01730 265058

Email: postbox@opticalcomplaints.co.uk

www.opticalcomplaints.co.uk/complaints-process/

This service will be able to help you if you are dissatisfied with goods or services you've received, or are receiving from an optician registered with the General Optical Council.



ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS

Adult Social Care complaints

Your local Adult Social Care Service aim to provide good quality services to residents who meet the criteria for Social Care and are keen to learn from your complements, comments, concerns or complaints. Please let them know if:

- *You feel that they have done something wrong or badly*
- *They have done something well*
- *They haven't done something they should have*
- *You feel you or someone you care for has been treated badly or unfairly*
- *You think they could make changes to some things for the better*

Borough Council area: Each Adult Social Care Service will have their own Complaints Procedure if you feel you need to raise an issue or concern. In the first instance you need to tell the people who provide the service to you of the concerns you have. Your Social Worker, Care Manager, or Service Manager will be willing to listen to you and try to resolve the situation.

Making a formal complaint

If the people providing a service to you are unable to resolve your concerns to your satisfaction you can make a formal complaint. To do this you need to contact the Social Care Complaints Manager or their equivalent at your local Adult Social Care office.

You may like someone to help you make the complaint. This could be:

- *A friend*
- *A family member*
- *An independent advocate*

The Social Care Complaints Manager may be able to signpost you to an independent advocacy service in your area. You can also get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau. Contact your local authority Social Care Complaints Manager on:

Bournemouth area

Social Care Complaints Manager

Room 102, 3rd Floor

Town Hall

Bourne Ave

Bournemouth

BH2 6DY

Tel: 01202 458953/ 01202 458712/ 01202 456820

Email: socialcarecomplaints@bournemouth.gov.uk

Poole Borough Council area

Borough of Poole

FREEPOST BH910

Adult Social Care

Civic Centre Annexe

Park Road

Poole

Dorset

BH15 2BR

Tel: 01202 261158

Email: comments.adultsocialcare@poole.gov.uk

Dorset County Council area

Hilary Butcher - Complaints Manager

Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services

Dorset County Council

County Hall

Dorchester

DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01305 221061

Fax: 01305 224325

Email: h.butcher@dorsetcc.gov.uk

After receiving details of your complaint the local authority will go through a procedure to ensure that they listen to and respond to your complaint, and where necessary make improvements for the future. They will ensure that:

- *They make sure that they really understand the issues*
- *Find out what you want to happen*
- *Discuss a plan with you of how they will deal with your complaint and any outcome you are seeking*
- *Keep you informed of how your complaint is progressing*
- *Act as quickly as they can*

Checks will be made to ensure that you, the person you care for, or on whose behalf you are making the complaint are either receiving services or may be eligible for them.

If your complaint involves both Health and Adult Social Care Services you will receive one single response from the organisation taking overall responsibility for answering the complaint. That organisation will liaise with the others involved to ensure that all aspects of the complaint are addressed and answered. When responding they will work out with you the best way to deal with your complaint, and acknowledge this within three working days. A number of ways to address the issues will be looked at including:

- *Asking the relevant team manager to talk through the issues with you, followed by a letter of response*

- *Arranging a meeting with yourself and other key people involved in the complaint to discuss the issues raised*
- *Arranging a formal investigation to take place*

Options will be discussed with you and you will be advised as to how long it is likely to be before your issues can be resolved. If a formal investigation needs to take place it will be carried out by someone who is not directly involved with providing you with services. This person will speak to all people involved and draft a report which will be shared with you and all key people involved to check factual accuracy. They will then produce a final report with conclusions and recommendations. Following the completion of the investigation a Senior Officer will then write to you offering a formal response to your complaint. This response will include a copy of the final report.

Making Improvements

Adult Social Care Services are able to make improvements in their services from the evidence gathered from complaints, comments and compliments generated by service users or their carers'. An Annual Complaints Report is available from the Social Care Complaints Manager (see page 15 for contact details of your Social Care Manager).

Bournemouth:

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/SocialCareHealth/AdultSocialCare/Commentscomplimentsandcomplaints/CommentsComplimentsComplaints.aspx>

Poole:

<http://www.boroughofpoole.com/health-and-social-care/help-for-adults/adult-social-care-comments-compliments-complaints/>

Dorset: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/358242>

What else can I do?

If following a response from a Senior Officer you are still dissatisfied and feel your complaint has not been resolved you can then refer it to the Local Government Ombudsman, who is entirely independent from the Council.

Local Government Ombudsman

If you remain unhappy with the response to your complaint about any service provided by the Local Authority following local resolution, formal investigation, and independent review, then you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, who is completely independent of the Local Authority and Government.

Local Government Ombudsman

LGO Advice Team

Po Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Text "Call back" to 0762 480 3014

www.lgo.org.uk/contactus/



COMPLAINTS ABOUT CARE SERVICES FROM INDEPENDENT CARE PROVIDERS

Complaints about care services from independent providers

If you are receiving services from an independent care agency or care home you should make your initial complaint to the manager of that service. All reputable care services will have their own complaints procedure in place to deal with such incidences. If the Local Authority is contributing towards your care with an independent agency or care home then this means that service has a contract with the local authority. Inform the Local Authority of any complaint you are pursuing with the service, and any response you receive as they will want to monitor the service providers that they contract services too. You can call on the advice of the Social Care Complaints Manager at your local authority to guide you through the complaint with the service provider.

Most care agencies and care homes are registered with the Care Quality Commission who are interested to hear of concerns and complaints that might breach regulated national standards in care that care homes and agencies have to meet. Your local Healthwatch office also has a role in collecting data about local social care services to feed to the Care Quality Commission, and through your local Citizens Advice Bureau can offer you advice, however they may not be able to help you with your specific complaint.



DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

If you would like to make an appeal against a Benefits decision contact the department that is dealing with your claim (address on all correspondence they have sent you) or seek advice from your local Job Centre Plus (their contact details will be on all correspondence you have received from them). The contact details may be for a regional contact centre who will either deal with your complaint or forward your details to an office more local to you who will contact you or arrange an appointment with you. Information is also available from: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus> .

Information about claiming benefits and details of the contact centres are also on our Help & Care Factsheets -"Carers Allowance", "Money Matters", and "Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Allowance" contact 0300 111 3303 to ask for a copy or download them from our website.



GENERAL AND CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

General and consumer complaints

If you need to make a complaint of a more general nature (a consumer complaint or complaint about a service provider) contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (C.A.B.) who will advise you of your rights and of the best course of action. Details of your local C.A.B. can be found in Yellow Pages or go on line to www.citizensadvice.org.uk .

Complaints about your energy provider

If you have an energy problem, in the first instance you should contact your energy supplier. If you are dissatisfied with their response your complaint should be prioritized within the supply company in accordance with their complaint handling procedures. To get advice on how to make a complaint about your energy supplier contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (see above) who will advise you how to process your complaint and can refer you on to:

Energy Ombudsman

PO Box 66

Warrington

WA4 9DF

Tel: 0330 440 1624

Fax: 0330 440 1625

Textphone: 0330 440 1600

Email: enquiries@os-energy.org

[www.ombudsman-services.org/energy-\(http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy.html\)](http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy-(http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy.html))

If your energy supplier is unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction they must tell you this in writing. This is called a letter of deadlock. You can pursue your complaint further with the Ombudsman once you have received a letter of deadlock. If you have not received a letter of deadlock you must wait at least eight weeks before contacting the Ombudsman. Your complaint must be submitted within nine months of your original complaint to your supplier. Or, if you have received a letter of deadlock, you must submit your complaint to the Ombudsman within six months of receiving your letter.



FURTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

44 High Street
Croydon
Surrey
CRO 1YB
Tel: 0845 123 2352
Email: advice@avma.org.uk
www.avma.org.uk

Action on Elder Abuse

PO Box 60001
Streatham
London, SW16 9BY
Helpline: 0808 808 8141
Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk
www.elderabuse.org.uk

Contact this helpline if you know of any older person who you suspect may be suffering any form of abuse either in a care setting or in the community.

They Work for You

www.TheyWorkForYou.com is a website where you can find out more about your local MP, national government, and the Houses of Parliament.



HELP & CARE CONTACT DETAILS

Help us to help you

As a charitable organisation Help & Care relies heavily on the donations and goodwill of the local community. However large or small, every gift makes a difference!

Please contact us using the contact details below if you would like information about:

- *How to make a one off donation or*
- *How to set up a regular monthly donation or*
- *How to remember us in your Will*

Help & Care contact details

Help & Care offer a range of services and factsheets to older people, carers, and disabled people across Dorset. If you would like to know more about our information and support services, Advocacy, and our Handiworks Plus services, or you would like a copy of this factsheet in your own language, large print, Braille, or on audio tape or compact disc please contact us on the details below.

By telephone: 0300 111 3303

By fax: 01202 432299

Opening hours are: Monday - Thursday 9am -5pm and Friday 10am - 4.30pm. Answering machine available outside these hours.

Textphone for hard of hearing: 01202 416047

Email: contact@helpandcare.org.uk

Website: www.helpandcare.org.uk

Use the "Contact" form within the website to let us know how best we can help you.

Contact by post: Help & Care, The Pokesdown Centre, 896 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH7 6DL

You can also make an appointment to call in and see us at The Pokesdown Centre, Bournemouth.

This information has been researched and produced by Help & Care and was believed to be correct at the time of production. Inclusion does not imply a recommendation by Help & Care.

*Last IS Review in Feb 2014. Next total review due Feb 2016.
Latest amendment added: November 2016.*

