

How to complain about NHS Improvement

At NHS Improvement we set ourselves very high standards in everything we do. We continuously try to do better and to learn from our mistakes. If you see us falling short of those high standards, we want you to tell us so we can put things right.

What is a complaint?

We define a complaint under this procedure as:

“any expression of dissatisfaction with our actions or our failure to act that requires a response”.

For example, you may wish to complain if you feel we have:

- treated you unfairly
- provided poor service
- acted incorrectly
- delayed unreasonably in doing something
- failed to take action
- failed to provide information.

It does **not** include:

- requests for information under either the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection Act, or a complaint that we have failed to comply with a Freedom of Information request
- whistleblowing (as defined by our whistleblowing policies)
- employment matters
- a matter which is or has been investigated by the Health Service Ombudsman.

What will we look at?

Our approach is also designed to reflect the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's approach to complaints handling, as the Ombudsman has jurisdiction to investigate complaints about NHS Improvement. It is also intended to be consistent with the NHS complaints

procedure, which applies to complaints to the NHS Trust Development Authority, one of the bodies which come together to form NHS Improvement.

This means that, given the nature of our role, when we investigate complaints about NHS Improvement, the primary focus is on process rather than the merits of the substantive decision being complained about (eg a decision not to take regulatory action). Therefore, we generally look at whether we have:

- correctly followed our policies and procedures (which may include looking at whether those policies and processes are fit for purpose)
- acted reasonably
- acted without undue delay.

However, if we find that we failed to follow the correct process, we then need to look at whether the substantive decision would have been different (eg would we have taken regulatory action had we followed the correct process?). This is necessary to determine the impact of the fault identified.

Time limits for making a complaint

Please make your complaint as soon as possible. We are unlikely to investigate a complaint made to us more than 12 months after the event that has caused you to complain.

How to complain about NHS Improvement

Please make your complaint to our Head of Enquiries, Complaints and Whistleblowing:

Address: NHS Improvement, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG

Email: enquiries@improvement.nhs.uk

Telephone: 020 3747 0900

How NHS Improvement will deal with your complaint

We will:

- acknowledge receipt within 3 working days
- telephone you where possible to confirm our understanding of your complaint, agree how your complaint will be handled and a timescale for completing our investigation

- investigate your complaint, which may include gathering documents and interviewing members of staff, in a manner appropriate to resolve the matter speedily and efficiently
- during the investigation, keep you informed of progress, as far as reasonably practicable
- write to you with a provisional decision within 20 working days of receipt*. You will then have 10 working days to comment and/or provide extra information
- consider your response to our provisional decision and decide within a further 10 working days whether to investigate further or reach a final decision
- apologise if we have got things wrong and take action if necessary in the light of the outcome of the complaint, including making changes to our processes to avoid making the same mistake again.

The Chief Executive will be made aware of all complaints about NHS Improvement.

*If we think it will take longer than 20 working days to provide a provisional decision, we will write to let you know.

Next steps

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, you can complain to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

PHSO Helpline: 0345 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk