

Have your say! Your right to be heard

How to give us your comments, suggestions or complaints about your health care



Who is this leaflet for and what's it about?

This leaflet is for young people who use the National Health Service (NHS).

In the NHS, we want to give you the best possible care and treatment. But there may be times when you think we could do better. And sometimes you may even want to tell us about something we've done well.

Whatever age you are, you have rights when it comes to your health including:

- the right to have your say and to be listened to
- the right to complain if you are unhappy about something we've done.

We want you to tell us if you have a comment, suggestion or concern about your health care. This leaflet tells you how.

How to have your say

If you tell us how you feel about the care you receive, we can make changes so that the health service is better for you and for other young people.

What can I have my say about?

You can tell us about anything that is important to you. We want to hear your feedback – tell us what you think by giving us any **comments**, **ideas** and **suggestions** you have about the NHS.

- You may feel that health workers (doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other people who look after your health) haven't given you enough information about your care or treatment.
- Maybe you think that there should be more services for young people.
- If you're in hospital now or have been recently, you may want to tell us what you think about the food or the ward.
- You may think that health workers should listen to you more, and talk to you as well as to your parents.

These are just examples. You can tell us what you think about anything to do with your care. Remember, you can tell us about good things too!

How can I have my say?

There are lots of ways to make yourself heard. For example, you can:

- speak to any health worker looking after you about how you feel
- put your comments in a suggestion box
- talk to your parent, guardian or another adult you trust. You can ask them to tell us what you think if you don't want to do it yourself.
- give your feedback directly to your local health board, which is in charge of NHS services in your area.

How do I give feedback to the health board?

Every health board has a department that deals with feedback. They're keen to hear your opinion.

To have your voice heard, you need to get in touch with the right person.

To find out who to contact in your area you can:

- visit your local health board's website to find a feedback form, phone number, email address or postal address
- phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88) for advice on who to contact.

How to make a complaint and how we deal with complaints

We know things don't always go right. If you're really worried, upset or unhappy about something we've done, you can make a complaint.

How do I make a complaint about the NHS?

First of all, try speaking to one of the health workers who is looking after you. Sometimes a problem can be sorted out on the spot.

If you don't want to do this, don't worry. there are other ways to complain. You can:

- speak to someone in charge at your GP surgery or hospital (for example, you can make a complaint to the manager of your doctor's surgery)
- complain directly to your health board.

You can make a complaint in person, by phone or in writing. To get the right contact details you can:

- ask any member of staff about how to make a complaint
- phone the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)
- visit your health board's website
- look for the leaflet **Making a complaint about the NHS** which has contact details for complaints teams in your area. Cover of complaints leaflet. It should be available in any place where you get healthcare, or get it online (www.hris.org.uk).

What do I need to tell you when I make a complaint?

Please give us as much information as you can. This will help us look into your complaint as quickly as possible. We will also ask for your name and address so that we can let you know how we are dealing with your complaint.

Please let us know:

- your name
- what happened
- when and where it happened
- the names of any staff involved
- your address. If you don't want us to write to your home address, you can:
 - give us the address of someone you trust. Remember to ask them if it's OK before you do this.
 - ask us to contact you by email. Not all complaints teams can contact you this way but you have the right to ask.

If you would like help to make a complaint, look at pages 4 to 5 for a list of useful contacts.

What happens once I've made a complaint?

We handle all complaints in several stages. This means that everyone is treated fairly no matter where they live or what age they are.

- When you make a complaint we will write to you within three working days. This is to let you know that we are looking into your complaint and tell you what we plan to do next.
- We will do our best to deal with the complaint and then write to you again to let you know what's happened. In this letter we will:
 - explain what we will do to stop this happening again to you or to anyone else
 - tell you if there are parts of your complaint that we can't do anything about and explain why
 - apologise if we've done something wrong, and
 - tell you what to do next if you're unhappy with the result of your complaint.



Keeping your information private

We want to hear your opinions and we will treat what you tell us with respect.

Will you tell anyone else what I say?

We may need to discuss what you tell us with other health workers. We may need to look at your health records to deal with your complaint. If you don't want us to do this, let us know.

Page 6 tells you how to find out more about confidentiality and your rights.

What about my parents?

You might want to discuss your feedback or a complaint with your parent, guardian or another adult you trust before you have your say. **It's up to you.**

Unless you agree, we won't tell your parent or guardian anything you tell us.

Your parent or guardian is allowed to give us comments or make a complaint if they are unhappy with the way you have been treated. They can do this without your agreement if decisions about your health have been too difficult for you to make yourself. Even if this happens, you still have the right to have **your** opinions heard.

Help to have your say

If you need help or advice about having your say there are a lot of people who can help. You can choose from any of the places that we've listed in this section. There are lots of ways to get in touch so you can choose the way that suits you best.

- For advice or help with making a complaint, you can speak to someone at your local **citizens advice bureau** (CAB). CABs are free, confidential, independent, local charities that can give advice to anybody of any age. You can find your nearest bureau in the phone book or on the Citizens Advice Scotland website (www.cas.org.uk).

- **Action for Sick Children (Scotland)** work with children, young people and their families by giving health care information and support. This service can also help you have your say about your health needs and rights.

Action for Sick Children (Scotland)
22 Laurie Street
Edinburgh EH6 7AB

Phone **0131 553 6553**

Email enquiries@ascscotland.org.uk

Website www.ascscotland.org.uk



- **The Scottish Child Law Centre** is independent and confidential and can give you information about your rights and how the law affects you.

The Scottish Child Law Centre
54 East Crosscauseway
Edinburgh EH8 9HD

Information helpline **0131 667 6333**
Freephone number **0800 328 8970**
(for under 18s)

Email **enquiries@sclc.org.uk**
Free text enquiry service: text 'SCLC'
followed by your question to **80800**
(replies will be sent to your mobile)
Website **www.sclc.org.uk**

- **ChildLine** is a free and confidential helpline for all children and young people in the UK. You can call, email or write to ChildLine for help and advice about anything.

ChildLine
Freepost 1111
Glasgow G1 1BR

Freephone number **0800 1111**
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
Email **scotland@childline.org.uk**
Website **www.childline.org.uk**

- **Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People** (SCCYP) promotes and protects your rights. If you want to know more about your rights and how to have a say about your health care then contact SCCYP.

Scotland's Commissioner for
Children and Young People
85 Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AU

Phone **0131 558 3733**
Freephone **0800 019 1179**
(for young people)
Email **enquiries@sccyp.org.uk**
Website **www.sccyp.org.uk**

- **The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** service is independent and free. This service cannot help you to make a complaint. The Ombudsman helps people who are still having problems after they have made a complaint. They can help if you are finding it difficult to get an answer to your complaint or if you are unhappy with the results of a complaint you have made about the NHS.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost EH 641
Edinburgh EH3 0BR

Phone **0800 377 7330**
Email **ask@spsso.org.uk**
Text **0790 049 4372**
Website **www.spsso.org.uk**



Information about health rights

This leaflet is part of the following series:

- **Consent – your rights** tells you about your right to be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment.
- **Confidentiality – your rights** lets you know how the health service keeps information about you private.
- A more detailed version of this leaflet called **Making a complaint about the NHS** is available in other languages and formats.

To ask for this information in another language or format email: ask@hris.org.uk

You can get these leaflets from:

- GP surgeries, dental surgeries, hospitals and any other places where you get NHS care
- the NHS helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone **18001 0800 22 44 88**) which can also provide an interpreting service
- www.hris.org.uk



We have tried our best to make sure this leaflet is correct, but the law can be more complicated than this. If you are thinking about taking legal action and need advice, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau, another advice agency or the Scottish Child Law Centre.

Produced by Health Rights Information Scotland, a project of Consumer Focus Scotland, for the Scottish Government Health Directorates.

