

# Information Sheet

## 27 How to Make a Complaint

This information sheet is aimed at people who are having problems with their care home, local council or the NHS. It explains the steps you can take to challenge a decision or make a complaint.

Please note: in this information sheet, where we say 'social services' this means local health and social services trust for people in Northern Ireland, or social work department in Scotland.

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## General advice on making a complaint

If you are unhappy with the way you have been treated by your local council or NHS you may want to make a complaint. The different steps you can take are outlined in this information sheet. But first, here is some general advice on how to deal with any complaint.

- Decide if you want to make an informal or a formal complaint. To make an **informal complaint**, speak to someone to try to sort things out as quickly as possible. You can clear up many problems by having an informal chat with a member of staff at the organisation. Most people make an informal complaint first as a **formal complaint** is more serious and may take longer to resolve. For a formal complaint, ask for information about the procedure and put your complaint in writing. Someone will investigate and then reply, in writing, telling you what they are going to do about it. All service providers must have a complaints procedure. It must set out how service users, or those acting on their behalf, can complain about the service.
- Be clear about what it is you are unhappy about. Your complaint is more likely to be resolved to your satisfaction if you can be precise about what you are complaining about.
- Say what you want the result of your complaint to be. Do you want an apology? Do you want an explanation of what went wrong and why? Do you want something to be changed so that other people don't have the same experience you have had?
- If you want compensation, this may be possible in some cases, but the complaints procedure may not be the right route for you. You may want to get advice on this.
- Try to be as clear and concise as you can in any letters you are writing.
- If you speak to someone about your complaint, by telephone or in person, it is a good idea to make a record of the time, date and name of the person you spoke to. For example, you may have made your initial complaint in person, or made a phone call to check your complaint has been received. Follow up any conversations with a letter confirming what

was discussed. Make sure you keep a photocopy of any letters you send and keep all letters and emails you receive.

- If you are making a formal complaint, state this clearly in your letter. This will mean that your care home, local council or NHS service will have to deal with your complaint within set time limits. There is more information on the time limits for care home, local council and NHS complaints in the next three sections of this information sheet.
- You may find it useful to get further advice before making a complaint: for example, from your local **Citizens Advice Bureau**, or by calling our free advice service **SeniorLine** on **0808 800 6565 (0808 808 7575 in Northern Ireland)**. We give details later on where else you can go to get advice, depending on what your complaint is about.

## Complaining about a care home

If you live in a care home and you are not happy about the home, its staff or the treatment you receive, you can make a complaint. You can also make a complaint if you are the relative of somebody who lives in a care home and are not happy about their treatment. You have the right to feel safe, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

### Stage 1 – informal complaint

You can clear up many problems by having an informal chat with a member of staff or the manager of the care home itself. You could ask a friend or relative or your local Citizens Advice Bureau to help you make your complaint.

You have the right to complain if you are not happy about the way you are treated. The staff have a duty to take your complaint seriously and do something about it. If they can't, they should explain why not, and give you a good reason. Staff must reply to complaints within 28 days.

### Stage 2 – formal complaint

If you're not satisfied after an informal chat, you may want to make a formal complaint to your care home. All registered care homes must have a **complaints procedure**, which should have been clearly explained to you when you moved in. It must set out how service users or those acting on their behalf can complain about the service. All care homes should have a Service

User's Guide, which must be given to each resident and anyone else who requests it. It must include details of the complaints procedure.

### Stage 3

If you are still not happy you can make a formal complaint to the complaints manager at your local social services. You will be asked to complete a complaints form. Some complaints, for instance those that are about care standards, cannot be investigated under the complaints procedure. If this is the case with your complaint, the complaints manager will write to explain why your complaint can't be dealt with and what else you might be able to do.

If you do not wish to complain to the home directly you should contact the manager of your local social services. If you are unhappy about the quality of care you or your relative is receiving, you may also want to ask for a reassessment of your care needs in case the home is no longer able to provide a service that meets your needs.

### Stage 4

If you have complained to your local social services and you are still not happy, you should complain to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (England); the Care Commission (Scotland); the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales or the Northern Ireland Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. Their contact details can be found on pages 16–17. If your complaint is about a private care home this is the last stage you can go through. These bodies will not investigate your complaint, but they should check whether or not the care home is complying with the national care standards.

If your complaint is about a local council care home you can complain to an ombudsman. You should complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (England); the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales; Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or the Northern Ireland Ombudsman. Their contact details can be found on pages 18–19.

### Legal action

If you have been through all the stages above and you're still not happy, you may be able to go to court for a judicial review to try to resolve your dispute. Judicial review is only possible if there are legal grounds to challenge a decision or action of a public authority, like the council or CSCI, not a private care provider. This can be very expensive unless you are eligible for legal aid. If you are eligible, the Legal Services Commission will be able to help you find a

suitable solicitor. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau should be able to advise you about whether you are eligible for legal aid. Contact details for the Legal Services Commission can be found on page 17, contact details for your local Citizens Advice Bureau will be in your phone book.

## Getting help with making a complaint

If you want help with making your complaint, you can get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Age Concern group.

There are different independent bodies in each UK country which inspect and report on care services.

- If you are in **England** you should contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) helpline for advice.
- If you are in **Scotland** you should contact the Care Commission.
- If you are in **Wales** you should contact the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW). You can complain directly to it about social care received from care homes.
- If you are in **Northern Ireland** you should contact the Northern Ireland Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority.

See pages 16–17 for contact details of all of the above.

## Challenging your local council

Local councils provide social care services. The service could be help to allow you to continue living at home, help you care from someone living at home or it could be a place in a care home. You can challenge your local council if you disagree with a decision that has been made about your care, or about the funding of your care. For example, you may want to put in a complaint if you:

- have been refused an assessment or re-assessment of your needs;
- feel that you are being asked to wait an unreasonable length of time to have your needs assessed;
- don't feel the assessment took into account all your needs;
- feel that the services you are receiving are not meeting your needs;
- have a problem with the way your services are being provided;
- are being asked to wait a long time for equipment or adaptations;

- feel that you are being charged an unreasonable amount for your care; or
- are having problems getting local council funding for a care home place.

You cannot:

- complain about something that you have already made a complaint about;
- complain about something that is nothing to do with social services;
- complain about something that you have said you are intending to go to court about;
- complain about something trivial, just to be annoying or cause inconvenience – this is called being ‘frivolous or vexatious’; or
- complain about something which is already being dealt with in a disciplinary or court case.

Normally, complaints must be made within 12 months of the event happening but occasionally late complaints may be considered. If you want to complain about something that happened more than 12 months ago you should talk to the complaints officer at your council and explain why you couldn’t complain earlier. The council may still accept your complaint.

There is more than one course of action you can take to challenge your local council, as described below. The chart on page 10 outlines your options.

## Local council complaints procedure

There are usually three stages to the local council complaints procedure:

- **stage one** – involves you writing to the complaints manager at your local council
- **stage two** – your complaint will be heard by an adjudicating officer
- **review stage** – there will be an independent review of the complaint.

We look at each of these stages in more detail over the next few pages. If you would like further information, you should be able to get a leaflet from your local council that explains its complaints procedure. It should also have a complaints officer who can advise you. Or you can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau or call our free advice service **SeniorLine** on **0808 800 6565** (**0808 808 7575** in **Northern Ireland**).

### Stage one complaint

To make a complaint you should contact the local council through its complaints manager to make your complaint. Explain why you want to complain and what you want to happen. You should do this in writing. You should get a response from the council within 10 working days although this can be extended to 20 days if necessary.

If you have not heard anything after 20 working days, the complaints manager should tell you how to make a stage two complaint. If you do receive a response but you are not happy with it, you can also make a stage two complaint.

### Stage two complaint

You must write, asking for a formal investigation, within 20 working days of receiving the response to your stage one complaint. The complaints manager will appoint an investigating officer and will discuss your complaint and what you want to happen with you. The investigation should be completed within 25 working days although this can be extended to 65 days. If this happens you should be contacted to explain why. You should then be told the result of the investigation.

If you are still unhappy you can ask for an independent review.

### Review stage

You can ask for a review of the outcome if you do not agree with it. You must request a review, in writing, **within 28 days** of receiving the formal decision. You should be told who to write to when you receive the formal decision from your local council.

The complaints manager will arrange a 'panel hearing'. You should be informed about this hearing in writing and be invited to attend. The panel will consist of three people, at least two of whom should be independent from the local council. It is fairly informal and you are allowed to take someone with you to speak on your behalf. The only person you cannot take is a solicitor acting in a professional capacity. If you would prefer not to attend, or you are unable to do so, you can send any additional details you would like considered, at any time before the date of the panel hearing. The panel should meet within **30 working days** of receiving your complaint.

Once the panel has considered your complaint, it should give a written decision and forward its recommendations to you and the local council within five working days. The council must then decide what action to take and tell you what it is going to do within **15 working days**.

#### Local Government Ombudsman

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the panel hearing, you can make a formal complaint to the ombudsman who investigates cases of bad practice by the local council. The ombudsman has the power to award compensation, but it can be a slow process – investigations take on average 18 months. For more information contact the ombudsman for your country. Their contact details are on page 18.

#### Local government monitoring officer

You can make a formal complaint to your local council's monitoring officer as an alternative (or in addition) to using the local council's complaints procedure. This may get a speedier result. The monitoring officer can investigate unlawful decisions taken by the council. Several people have called Help the Aged to say that their local council doesn't have a 'monitoring officer'. But each local council must have someone who takes on this role even if they don't have this specific job title. This could be the council's complaints officer or solicitor. You may need to ask who does this job and find out their full name to get in touch.

Put your complaint in writing, setting out why you think the local council's decision is unlawful. There is no set time limit for the monitoring officer to deal with your complaint, but if you do not get a reply within a couple of weeks write again, or contact the monitoring officer by phone.

#### Lobbying

Whatever else you do, you can also ask your local councillor or MP to take up your case. They can put extra pressure on your local council to resolve your complaint quickly. Similarly, a local group such as Age Concern, or a Citizens Advice Bureau, may be able to help. It may also be worth writing a letter to your local paper to let it know what the local council is doing. In the face of bad publicity, you may find that the local council reviews its decision. However, seek advice first – using the media doesn't always work.



## Advocacy services

You can get advice and support to make a complaint from an independent advocacy service. An advocate is someone who can support you and speak on your behalf. An independent advocacy service has expert knowledge of how the system works; it uses this knowledge to represent your interests and assist you to get your point across more effectively.

- Your **local council social services** department should be able to give you information about local advocacy organisations that can help you to make a complaint.
- The charity **Counsel and Care** can provide details of advocacy organisations in your area. Call **0845 300 7585**.
- Your local **Age Concern** may provide an advocacy service. Contact details should be listed in your phone book.
- You can ask your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** for advice and support in making a complaint. Check your phone book for contact details.

## Successful outcomes

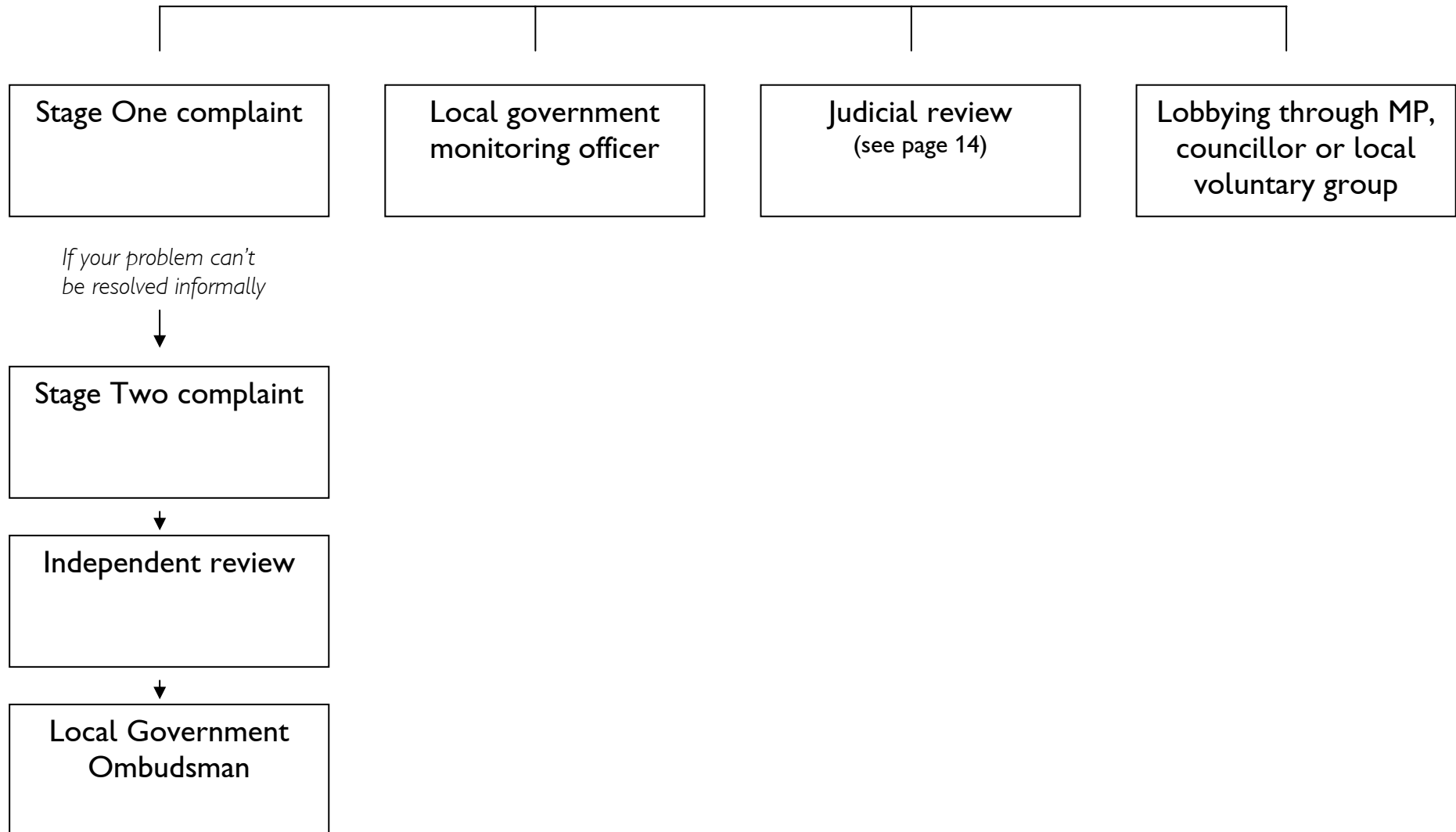
Calls to Help the Aged show that it's often worth making a complaint if you are unhappy with a local council decision. There are lots of cases where people have successfully challenged local council decisions quickly and with relatively little effort. Here are two examples, both involving people who felt they had been unreasonably refused care home funding.

1. Mrs Dudley was living in a care home, in England, and her husband was still living at home. Mrs Dudley's savings had fallen to £21,500, so her husband contacted social services. A social worker visited Mrs Dudley and assessed her as needing residential care. The social worker told Mr Dudley that although his wife's savings were below £22,250 social services would not fund her care. Mr Dudley took advice and immediately made a formal complaint to social services. He also saw a solicitor about starting a judicial review and made this known to social services. As a result, Mrs Dudley's case was reviewed and social services agreed to fund her care home fees.
2. Miss Edwards was concerned about her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother was assessed as needing residential care and the social worker wanted her to sell her house to pay the fees. Her grandmother didn't want to do this as her daughter (Miss Edwards' mother), herself

aged 62, still lived in the house. Miss Edwards was advised by Help the Aged that the social worker should ignore the value of her grandmother's home as her daughter was over 60 and living there. Miss Edwards was given details of the guidance the social worker should follow and with this information she got back in touch with the social worker. A week later, Miss Edwards rang Help the Aged to say that the social worker had looked at the case again and agreed that social services would ignore the value of the grandmother's home and pay her residential care fees.

## Ways to complain

If you are unhappy with a **local council** decision, the table below will give you an idea of the steps you can take in order to make a complaint.



# Complaining about the NHS

If you are not happy with the treatment you have received from the NHS you can make a complaint. You can also complain if you feel that the NHS is not providing services or equipment to meet your needs.

Depending on the problem you have, it may be best to try to sort out the problem informally if you can by talking to the staff at the service involved. But if this does not help, you can use the NHS complaints procedure to make a formal complaint. You can use this procedure to complain about your NHS doctor, nurse, dentist, pharmacist, optician or any other NHS service you are unhappy with.

You have the right to make a complaint, have it considered and get a response from that NHS service. Ask for a copy of the complaints procedure – all NHS services should have one.

## Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

You usually need to make a formal complaint within six months of the incident you are unhappy about, or six months from the date you first became aware of it. In some cases it may be possible for this time limit to be extended: for example, if you couldn't complain in time because you were too ill or grieving. But this will depend on the individual situation.

## Who can complain?

To use the NHS complaints procedure you must be a patient or a former patient of the NHS service you are complaining about. You can also complain on behalf of another person: for example, a relative or someone you care for. But the NHS service looking into the complaint must agree that you are a suitable representative for that person.

## Who do I complain to?

Who you complain to and what you do if you are not happy with the outcome depends on which UK country you live in. The general procedure is outlined over the next two pages.

### Stage 1 – local resolution

The first stage of the NHS complaints system, no matter which country in the UK you live in, is to make a formal complaint to the NHS service that you are

unhappy with. Some large health centres and hospitals will have a designated complaints manager whom you can contact. Even if some smaller practices do not, it must have someone who is responsible for complaints. Ask for the name of the person who deals with complaints.

You can usually complain in person, over the phone or in writing. Make it clear that you are making a formal complaint and ask for a written acknowledgement (although you should get one anyway). If you complain in person or over the phone it is a good idea to follow this up in writing.

Once your complaint has been received you should get an outcome letter (or progress report) **within 25 working days**. Most complaints are resolved at this stage.

#### Stage 2 – independent review

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint you can ask for an independent review (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales). You can also ask for a review if the local resolution stage has taken six months or longer and your complaint still hasn't been resolved.

You usually need to ask for an independent review **within 28 days** of getting the outcome letter from your initial complaint (or within two months in England). Your outcome letter will give details of whom to contact for an independent review.

- In **England**, the Healthcare Commission deals with independent reviews.
- In **Northern Ireland** independent reviews are carried out by your local health board.
- In **Wales** you can ask the Independent Review Secretariat for an independent review of your complaint.

In **Scotland**, the second stage is to refer your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if you feel it has not been sorted out locally. See Stage 3 below for details.

See pages 15–21 for contact details.

#### Stage 3 – referral to the ombudsman

You can refer your complaint to your health service ombudsman as a last resort. Before doing so you must have given the NHS a chance to investigate the matter, and completed the independent review stage. The ombudsman will

look at complaints concerning things such as faulty services or administration, or a long wait for treatment. The ombudsman can also investigate complaints about matters involving a doctor's clinical judgement.

Contact the ombudsman's office for advice on making your complaint. It can advise you on whether the ombudsman will be able to look at your complaint, and on what information you need to provide. Contact details are on page 18.

If he or she feels it is appropriate, the ombudsman can conduct an investigation into the complaint, and will write a report, a copy of which will be sent to the relevant authority. This service is free. The ombudsman can't enforce his or her recommendations, but they are usually accepted.

### Can I get financial compensation?

You can't get financial compensation through the NHS complaints procedure. To achieve this you would need to take legal action against the NHS. This can be costly and complicated but you may be able to get public funding through legal aid or find a solicitor who will take the case on a no-win, no-fee basis. If you are thinking about taking legal action it is a good idea to seek advice first from an organisation with expertise in this area, such as Action for the Victims of Medical Accidents, a specialist lawyer or an independent advice centre.

### Getting help with making a complaint

There are different independent bodies in each UK country that act to represent the interests of NHS patients. Contact the appropriate organisation for information and advice on making a complaint. See pages 20–21 for contact details.

- If you are in **England**, contact your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS may put you in touch with the local Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), which can advise and support you in taking your complaint further.
- If you are in **Wales**, contact your local community health council.
- If you are in **Northern Ireland**, contact your local health and social services council.
- In **Scotland**, your local NHS board is responsible for helping you make a complaint.

Another organisation which can provide advice on patients' rights and making a complaint is the **Patients Association**. It can also give you information about

other useful organisations. You can call the helpline on **0845 608 4455**, open 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice on how to make a formal complaint – look in your phone book for contact details.

## Dual complaints

If your complaint involves the NHS **and** your local council you can complain to either body, or both. If you complain to the council, but your complaint includes elements that are the responsibility of the NHS, the council must ask if you wish your complaint to be forwarded to the NHS within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. If your complaint to the NHS includes elements that are the responsibility of the council, the NHS must ask if you wish your complaint to be forwarded to the council within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. Your complaint should then be forwarded as soon as possible.

The Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 state that the council and the NHS should cooperate with one another when dealing with a complaint. They must provide each other with relevant information, both bodies should attend meetings about the complaint and agree which of them should deal with the complaint. These regulations also give guidance about who should be part of a review panel and about timescales for hearing complaints. Once the review panel has met, you should be told about their recommendations and their reasons within five working days.

## Judicial review

A judicial review is a request to the High Court to consider whether a decision of your local council or NHS organisation is lawful. Lawful means that the decision is legal, fair and reasonable. You must apply for judicial review without delay; and in any event you must apply within three months of the decision you want to challenge (and in some cases sooner).

Depending on the circumstances you may not have to go through the local council or NHS complaints procedure before you apply for judicial review. In an emergency, you can sometimes get an injunction very quickly in a judicial review case: for example, to stop the council unlawfully withdrawing your services.

If you are considering judicial review you will need specialist legal advice. The Legal Services Commission can tell you which solicitors' firms specialise in community care or public law. See page 17 for contact details.

Bear in mind that judicial review isn't the best option for everyone and does not guarantee that the decision will change, even if it was made unlawfully. It is very expensive, however, if you are financially eligible for public funding, you will either pay nothing or an agreed fixed contribution to your costs.

If you are considering a judicial review you should let the local council or NHS organisation know – this may prompt them to resolve your case quickly!

**Note** Certain successful judicial reviews have forced all local councils to reconsider their policies. For example, in 1997 Help the Aged, on behalf of older people, took Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to judicial review over its decision to ignore the set capital limits and force people to use their savings to pay for residential care. Help the Aged was successful, and as a result new legislation and guidance has been created to protect the savings of people entering care homes.

## Useful contacts

### **Citizens Advice Bureaux**

Check your phone book to find your local group.

### **The Healthcare Commission (for England)**

Freepost NAT 18958

Complaints Investigation Team

Manchester M1 9XZ

Tel: 0845 601 3012

Web: [www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk)

Deals with NHS independent reviews in England.



## **Independent Review Secretariat (for Wales)**

Mid and West Wales  
PO Box 2  
Brecon  
Powys LD3 0XR.  
Tel: 01874 712748

South Wales  
PO Box 21  
Cardiff CF10 2ZR.  
Tel: 029 2040 2262

North Wales  
PO Box 125  
Mold CH7 1WH.  
Tel: 01352 700227

Deals with NHS independent reviews in Wales.

Care Commissions

### **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

33 Greycoat Street  
London SW1P 2QF  
Tel: 0845 015 0120  
Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) inspects and reports on care services and councils in England to improve social care.

### **Care Commission**

Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee DD1 4NY  
Tel: 0845 603 0890  
Web: [www.carecommission.com](http://www.carecommission.com)

The Care Commission inspects care services in Scotland.

## **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**

4–5 Charnwood Court  
Heol Billingsley  
Parc Nantgarw  
Nantgarw CF15 7QZ  
Tel: 01443 848529  
Web: [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales makes sure that care services meet the standards that people in Wales have a right to expect.

## **Northern Ireland Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority**

9th Floor, Riverside Tower  
5 Lanyon Place  
Belfast BT1 3BT  
Tel: 028 9051 7500  
Web: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority is an independent body that is responsible for inspecting social care services in Northern Ireland.

Legal Help

## **Community Legal Services Direct**

Tel: 0845 345 4345  
Web: [www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)

## **The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission**

2nd Floor, Waterfront Plaza  
8 Laganbank Road  
Mays Meadow  
Belfast BT1 3BN  
Tel: 028 9040 8888  
Web: [www.nilsc.org.uk](http://www.nilsc.org.uk)

## **The Scottish Legal Aid Board**

44 Drumsheugh Gardens  
Edinburgh EH3 7SW  
Tel: 0131 226 7061  
Web: [www.slab.org.uk](http://www.slab.org.uk)

Ombudsmen

**Local Government Ombudsman (England)**

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0845 602 1983

Web: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

Deals with complaints about local councils in England.

**The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (England)**

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Helpline: 0845 015 4033

Web: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

Deals with complaints about NHS organisations in England.

**The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae

Pencoed CF35 5LJ

Tel: 01656 641150

Web: [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

Deals with complaints about all public bodies in Wales including local councils and the NHS.

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Helpline: 0800 377 7330

Web: [www.spso.org.uk](http://www.spso.org.uk)

Deals with complaints about all public bodies in Scotland including local councils and the NHS.

## **The Northern Ireland Ombudsman**

Freepost BEL 1478

Belfast BT1 6BR

Tel: 0800 34 34 24

Web: [www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

Deals with complaints about all public bodies in Northern Ireland including local councils and the NHS.

## NHS: information and advice about your rights and making a complaint

England:

### **Independent Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS)**

North Central London (Barnet; Camden; Haringey; Enfield; Islington)	0845 120 3784
North East London (Barking and Dagenham; Hackney; Havering; Tower Hamlets; Redbridge; Waltham Forest; Newham)	0845 337 3059
North West London (Brent; Ealing; Hillingdon; Hounslow; Westminster; Kensington and Chelsea; Hammersmith and Fulham; Harrow)	0845 337 3065
South East London (Bexley; Bromley; Greenwich; Lambeth; Lewisham; Southwark)	0845 337 3061
South West London (Croydon; Kingston-upon-Thames; Richmond; Sutton; Merton; Wandsworth)	0845 337 3063
South East	0845 600 8616
Eastern (Beds; Herts)	0845 456 1082
Eastern (Cambs; Norfolk; Suffolk)	0845 456 1084
Eastern (Essex)	0845 456 1083
South West	0845 120 3782
West Midlands (Birmingham; the Black Country)	0845 120 3748
West Midlands (Shropshire; Staffordshire)	0845 337 3054
West Midlands (Coventry; Warwickshire; Worcestershire; Herefordshire)	0845 337 3056
East Midlands	0845 650 0088
North East	0845 120 3732
North West	0845 120 3735
Yorkshire/Humberside	0845 120 3734

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

In England PALS can give general advice on making formal complaints and help to resolve less serious complaints through informal negotiation. Call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 to get the details of your local PALS or ask your local primary care trust (its details should be in your phone book).

Wales:

### **Board of Community Health Councils in Wales**

Park House

Greyfriars Road

Cardiff CF10 3AF

Tel: 0845 644 7814

Web: [www.patienthelp.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.patienthelp.wales.nhs.uk)

Scotland:

### **NHS boards in Scotland**

NHS Ayrshire and Arran	01292 885800
NHS Borders	01896 825500
NHS Dumfries and Galloway	01387 246246
NHS Fife	01592 643355
NHS Forth Valley	01786 463031
NHS Grampian	0845 456 6000
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	0141 201 4444
NHS Highland	01463 717123
NHS Lanarkshire	01698 281313
NHS Lothian	0131 537 9522
NHS Orkney	01856 888000
NHS Shetland	01595 743060
NHS Tayside	01382 818479
NHS Western Isles	01851 702997

Northern Ireland:

### **Health and social services councils**

Call freephone 0800 917 0222 to be put through to your local health and social services council.

For further information contact:

Information Resources Team  
Help the Aged  
207–221 Pentonville Road  
London N1 9UZ  
Tel: 020 7278 1114

If you have access to the internet you can download our advice leaflets and information sheets by logging on to **[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)**

**SeniorLine** is the free welfare rights advice and information service run by Help the Aged for older people and their carers. Trained advice workers offer free, confidential and impartial advice about:

- welfare and disability benefits
- care at home
- residential care
- housing options and adaptations
- access to health and community services.

Freephone: **0808 800 6565**

Textphone: **0800 26 96 26**

**9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday**

If you are in **Northern Ireland**, contact **SeniorLine** on **0808 808 7575**.

IS (NO) 27

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Help the Aged is a registered charity No. 272786, registered in England at the above address.