

What can I expect from the complaints process?

As a result of a complaint, NHS organisations can:

- carry out an investigation and offer an explanation for what happened
- offer an apology or some other statement of regret
- take steps to put matters right and reassure you that they have done so.

However, the complaints procedure cannot:

- look at issues relating to discipline, for example whether a member of staff should be dismissed
- strike a health professional off the register, or suspend their registration
- look at complaints about treatment provided privately unless it was paid for by the NHS.

FAQs

I feel anxious about making a complaint.

Can someone else do it for me?

Yes, you can ask a relative or friend to raise a concern or make the complaint on your behalf. We will ask you to sign a consent form, giving us permission to disclose your personal information to this person.

Will making a complaint go on my health record?

No, your complaint is not kept in your medical notes and it will not affect your future care in any way.

Can I make a complaint using a comment card?

No. We review comments included on our comment cards, and act upon them where appropriate, but we do not provide a written response to them.

Further sources of information

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815
e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: www.nhs.uk

Become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk

w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Making a complaint

Although we work hard to give the highest standards of care, sometimes things can go wrong. When this happens, we will do all that we can to put things right for you as quickly as possible. We will also do our best to make sure the same thing does not happen again.

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form,

w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets,

e: patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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A list of sources is available on request

Talking it through

If you have a concern about the treatment or care that you receive, it is best to address it straight away.

If you are staying in hospital, or are visiting someone who is staying in hospital, the best person to talk to is the ward manager or charge nurse. You can recognise them by the colour of their uniform which is dark blue. The ward manager or charge nurse will listen to your concerns, agree with you the actions that will be taken to resolve the matter, and update you on progress as required.

If the ward manager or charge nurse is not on duty, you can discuss your concerns with the nurse in charge.

If your concern is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can ask to speak to the matron for the department. Matrons wear purple uniforms.

If you are an outpatient, please ask the staff at any reception area if you can speak to someone about your concerns.

If you would rather talk to someone from outside the ward/department, please contact PALS, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (contact details are on the back page).

The PALS team can:

- advise you, your family, visitors and carers about the choices available to you under NHS care
- listen to your comments, suggestions and concerns about the services we provide
- help to resolve issues you have about our services
- provide information about NHS services.

Making a formal complaint

If we are unable to offer you a satisfactory response to your concerns, you can make a formal complaint by:

- writing to the Chief Executive: Ian Abbs, Chief Executive, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, Gassiot House, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH
- emailing the complaints team, **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk
- completing our online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/contact-us/feedback-forms/make-a-complaint.aspx

Writing a complaint

- You should make your complaint within 12 months from when the problem occurred. This makes it easier for everyone to remember what happened, and helps us to respond quickly.
- Please give as much relevant information as you can, including your name and address. If relevant, please also include the name of the doctor or nurse caring for you, the ward name and your hospital number.
- If you are raising more than one concern, please try to number each point. This helps us to make sure that we answer all of your concerns.

The PALS team can also give you more information, and support you in making a formal complaint. Please see the back page of this leaflet for their contact details.

Alternatively, you can also contact the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), run by POhWER, if you need help and support through the complaints process.

POhWER can be contacted as follows:

t: 020 3553 5960

Minicom: 0300 456 2364

By text: Send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

e: LondonIHCAS@pohwer.net or pohwer@pohwer.net

Skype: [pohwer.advocacy](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/pohwer.advocacy) (Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm).

By post: POhWER, PO Box 14043, Birmingham B6 9BL

w: www.pohwer.net

What happens next?

- We will send you a letter or email to acknowledge your complaint within three working days.
- We will do our best to give you a full reply as quickly as possible. We will inform you early in the process how long we will need to appropriately investigate and respond to your concerns.
- We may offer you an opportunity to meet with the relevant staff to clarify any issues. You will be able to invite a relative or friend to this meeting.
- In our reply, we will list actions we are taking to make sure that the problem you raised does not happen again.

What if I am still not happy?

If you are not satisfied following receipt of your response, you can contact the complaints team outlining why you are unhappy.

The complaints team will consider the issues raised and offer advice on how this should be managed.

You can also request an independent review of your complaint by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). The PHSO may:

- ask us to investigate your complaint further, or
- agree to independently review your complaint, or
- decide that no further action should be taken.

Please note that:

- you must write to the PHSO at the address below within 12 months of receiving our response.
- the PHSO will not investigate your case before you have received our response letter.

Full details of this process will be included in our response letter.

PHSO address:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP.

Your complaints are valuable to us, as they give us an opportunity to learn about problems with our service and to put things right.