In the NHS in Scotland, we try to give you the best possible care and treatment. We value comments, good or bad, to help us improve the service. If you are not happy about anything, please let us know.

This leaflet explains how to complain using the NHS complaints procedure.

**What can I complain about?**

Things you can complain about include:
- care or treatment you have had or are having in the NHS
- anything to do with the place where you are seen, for example a doctor’s surgery, a hospital or an ambulance
- any member of NHS staff involved in your care
- how our services in your local area are organised, if this has affected your care or treatment.

If your complaint also involves another part of the NHS or another organisation, such as social services, we may need to pass it to someone there. We will tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

**What can’t I complain about?**

There are some things you can't complain about through the NHS complaints procedure. These include:
- private health care or treatment
- services not provided or funded by the NHS, and
- something you are taking legal action about.

The NHS complaints procedure doesn’t usually provide financial compensation. For advice about financial compensation, you should contact your local citizens advice bureau or a solicitor.

**Who can complain?**

You can complain if you have:
- had or are having NHS care or treatment, or
- visited or used our services or facilities.

You can complain for someone else if you:
- have their agreement to complain – the patient would also need to agree that staff could look at their health records if necessary
- are a child’s parent, guardian or main carer and your child is not mature enough to understand how to make a complaint.
• have a welfare power of attorney or a welfare guardianship order for someone who cannot make decisions for themselves, and the order specifies that you have the power to make a complaint about health care
• are a relative of, or had a relationship with, a patient who has died and you were concerned about how they were treated before they died, or
• are acting as an advocate for the patient (see page 7 for more about advocacy).

**How long do I have to make a complaint?**

We have a time limit for complaints. Normally, you must make your complaint:
• within six months of the event you want to complain about, or
• within six months of you finding out that you have a reason to complain – but no longer than 12 months after the event.

However, if you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please speak to the person dealing with the complaint. Sometimes we can accept a complaint after the time limit.

You can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman about a decision by the NHS not to accept your complaint (see page 9 for more information).

**How to complain**

**What should I do?**

• If you can, first talk to a member of staff involved in your care. If you do this, we can try to sort out your complaint on the spot.
• If you are not able to talk to the NHS staff involved in your care, you can ask to speak to a senior member of staff or the complaints officer for the NHS organisation involved.
• You can complain in person, by phone, or in writing. When complaining, you should give:
  • your full name and address (and the patient’s name and address if you are complaining for them), and
  • as much helpful information as possible about what happened, where it happened and when.
• You can also make your complaint by fax, email or textphone (if available), but if you do this other people may be able to see your personal information.

**Who should I complain to?**

• You should first complain directly to the person or organisation providing the service.
• If you do not feel able to do this, contact your local
NHS board to find out who can help you with your complaint – see pages 11 to 14 of the leaflet.

- If your complaint is about NHS 24 or the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, you should first speak to the person who was dealing with you. If you do not feel able to do this, speak to the complaints officer at the organisation. The contact details are on page 15.
- If your complaint is about the Scottish Ambulance Service, you should complain to their headquarters. The contact details are on pages 14.
- If your complaint is about the State Hospital, you should complain to the complaints officer there. The contact details are on page 15.

**What happens after I have complained?**

- We will write to you within three working days of getting your complaint.
- This letter should:
  - tell you what action we will take to look into your complaint
  - offer you the chance to talk to a member of staff about the complaint
  - give you information about independent advice and support (see page 7 for more information), and
  - give you information about conciliation if this may be helpful (see page 8 for more information).
- We will keep information about you confidential. To investigate your complaint, we may have to talk to other NHS staff about you or show them your health records. If you don’t want us to share information from your health records, you should tell us when you make your complaint, but bear in mind that this may make it more difficult to look into your complaint.
- We will make a record of your details and complaint, and use it to help us make services better.

**When will I get a full response?**

- We will write to you with a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint.
- If your complaint is about a GP surgery, an NHS dental surgery, an NHS optician’s practice, or a pharmacy, we will respond within 10 working days.
- In some cases, we may need more time to give you a full response and won’t be able to keep to these timescales. If this happens, we will let you know and tell you why.
- In our response we will let you know the result of our investigation. We will:
  - show that we have looked into your complaint and reply to all the points raised in it
  - offer you an apology where things have gone wrong
explain what we will do to stop what you complained about happening again
- if necessary, explain why nothing more can be done about some parts of your complaint
- offer you the chance to talk to a member of staff if there is anything in the letter you don’t understand, and
- include information about the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in case you are unhappy with our response and want to take things further (see page 9 for more information).

Who can help me with my complaint?

Independent advice and support
- If you would like to speak to someone for advice or help with making a complaint you can contact your local citizens advice bureau. See page 10 for contact details.

Advocacy
- If you find it difficult to make a complaint yourself and want someone to speak for you, you can ask for an independent advocate. An independent advocate is someone from outside the NHS who can speak for you or help you express your views. Your local NHS board or complaints officer will be able to tell you about advocacy services in your area.

Conciliation
- Conciliation means bringing people together to try to resolve a problem.
- An independent conciliator can try to help you and the person you have complained about agree what should happen next.
- Conciliation can only be used if you and the person you’ve complained about both agree to it.
- To find out more about conciliation, please ask the person who is dealing with your complaint.

What if I change my mind after I’ve complained?
- You can change your mind about making a complaint at any time. Please let us know as soon as possible. It would be helpful if you could write and tell us, but otherwise a phone call will do.
What if I’m not happy about the way the NHS has handled my complaint?

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

- If the NHS has fully investigated your complaint and you are still not happy, you can ask the SPSO to consider your complaint further.
  - The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about. Sometimes this time limit will not apply. Please contact the SPSO for more information.
  - The SPSO cannot look at matters that have been or are being considered in court.
- If you are not happy with the way the NHS is dealing with your complaint, for example if you think it is taking too long, you can contact the SPSO.
- The Ombudsman does not take up all cases and will decide whether or not to investigate your complaint further.
- See page 16 to find out how to contact the Ombudsman.

How to find out more

- For more information about anything in this leaflet, contact:
  - the NHS helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)
  - your local citizens advice bureau (CAB) using the phone numbers below. You can also contact a bureau for independent advice and support (direct line: 0844 848 9600).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureau</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeton CAB</td>
<td>0141 554 0336</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castlemilk CAB</td>
<td>0141 634 0338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drumchapel CAB</td>
<td>0141 944 2612</td>
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<td>0141 944 0205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easterhouse CAB</td>
<td>0141 771 2328</td>
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<td>0141 773 1349</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Dunbartonshire CAB</td>
<td>0141 775 3220</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Renfrewshire CAB</td>
<td>0141 881 2032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glasgow Central CAB</td>
<td>0141 552 5556</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Pollok CAB</td>
<td>0141 876 4401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryhill CAB</td>
<td>0141 946 6373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkhead CAB</td>
<td>0141 554 0004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire CAB</td>
<td>0141 889 2121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutherglen &amp; Cambuslang CAB</td>
<td>0141 646 3191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Dunbartonshire CAB</td>
<td>01389 744 690</td>
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If you want to visit your local bureau you can find the address on the internet (**www.cas.org.uk**).
Contact details for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Complaints Offices are listed on the following pages. Further information is also available on our website at www.nhsggc.org.uk under “Contact Us/Get Involved”.

**Mental Health Services**
- Complaints about Adult Mental Health Inpatient Services (including Learning Disabilities and Perinatal Unit) - Mental Health Partnership, Modular Building 2, Gartnavel Royal Hospital, 1055 Great Western Road, Glasgow, G12 0XH - Phone **0141 232 2196**
- Complaints about Community Based Mental Health Services or Elderly Mental Health In-Patient Services - Contact the Community Health Partnership for the area concerned.
- Complaints about Children’s Mental Health Services - Contact Glasgow City CHP – North East Sector, Templeton Business Centre, 62 Templeton Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow, G40 1DA - Phone **0141 277 7450**

**Community Health Services & Elderly Mental Health In-Patient Services**
Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) and Community Health & Care Partnerships (CHCPs) provide Elderly Mental Health In-Patient Services and a range of community based health services at various hospitals and community sites throughout the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde area.

Complaints should be directed to the appropriate Partnership, or Partnership sector, contact details as noted below:-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Glasgow City CHP – North West Sector</th>
<th>Glasgow City CHP – North East Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gartnavel Royal Hospital Modular Building 1055 Great Western Rd Glasgow G12 0XH Phone: 0141 211 0370</td>
<td>Templeton Business Centre 62 Templeton Street Bridgeton Glasgow G40 1DA Phone: 0141 277 7450</td>
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<tr>
<th>Glasgow City CHP – South Sector</th>
<th>East Renfrewshire CHCP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forsyth House 151 Coplaw Street Glasgow G42 7DE Phone 0141 276 6707</td>
<td>1 Burnfield Avenue Giffnock Glasgow G46 7TL Phone: 0141 577 3839</td>
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<tr>
<th>Renfrewshire CHP</th>
<th>West Dunbartonshire CHCP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire House Cotton Street Paisley PA1 1AL Phone: 0141 842 6231</td>
<td>West Dunbartonshire Council Garshake Road Dumbarton West Dunbartonshire G82 3PU Phone: 01389 737599</td>
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<tr>
<th>East Dunbartonshire CHP</th>
<th>Inverclyde CHCP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHP Offices Stobhill Hospital 300 Balgrayhill Road Glasgow G21 3UR Phone: 0141 201 4217</td>
<td>Kirn House Ravenscraig Hospital Inverkip Road Greenock PA16 9HA Phone: 01475 715377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complaints about services managed by North Lanarkshire CHP and South Lanarkshire CHP should be directed to:
Patient Services Department
NHS Lanarkshire, Strathclyde Hospital
Airbles Road, Motherwell ML1 3BW
Phone 01698 245004

If you do not know which Partnership is responsible for the service you wish to complain about, please visit our website, or telephone 0141 314 4193 for help in directing your complaint.

Family Health Services
If your complaint is about a GP surgery, an NHS dental surgery, an NHS optician’s practice or a community pharmacy, these services have a complaints procedure based in the practice. Complaints should be directed there in the first instance.

If you do not feel comfortable doing this, the Health Board may be able to act as an intermediary between you and these services, to help resolve any differences. For assistance with this or for further information or advice on how to complain about these services, please contact the office below:-

Complaints Office
Clinical Governance Support Unit
Ward 3, Dykebar Hospital
Grahamston Road, Paisley PA2 7DE
Phone 0141 314 4193

Acute Services
The Acute Services Division operates with three Complaints Teams based across the city. They each provide support to the undernoted departments/services. If you are unsure which team to contact for advice please speak to any member of any team who will assist in ensuring that your complaint is dealt with by the appropriate Complaints Team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Specialty</th>
<th>Who to Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Accident &amp; Emergency</td>
<td>- Complaints about these services are handled by our team based at the Western Infirmary Dumbarton Road Glasgow G11 6NT</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Acute Medical Receiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Out of Hours Emergency Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dermatology</td>
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<td>- General Medicine</td>
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<td>- Cardiology</td>
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<td>- Gastroenterology</td>
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<td>- Rheumatology</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Respiratory</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Diabetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Infectious Diseases</td>
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<td>- Medicine for the Elderly</td>
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<td>- Palliative Care</td>
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<td>- Weight Management Service</td>
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Team Phone Number
0141 211 2926

Please leave a message if you are unable to speak to a member of staff
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Specialty</th>
<th>Who to Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery</td>
<td>Complaints about these services are handled by our team based at the Victoria Infirmary, 1st Floor McQuaker Building, Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow G42 9TY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bariatric Surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthopaedics</td>
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<td>Anaesthetics &amp; Theatres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Care &amp; Pain Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ear, Nose and Throat services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ophthalmology (eyes)</td>
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<td>Digestive Diseases</td>
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<td>Endoscopy &amp; Colonoscopy</td>
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<td>Urology</td>
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<td>Audiology</td>
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<td>Outpatients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-assessment clinics</td>
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**Team Phone Number**
0141 201 5100

Please leave a message if you are unable to speak to a member of staff

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<tr>
<th>Department/Specialty</th>
<th>Who to Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beatson Cancer Centre</td>
<td>Complaints about these services are handled by our team based at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Castle Street Glasgow G4 0SF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oncology Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic Surgery &amp; Burns Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
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<td>Spinal Injuries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery</td>
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<td>Renal Medicine</td>
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<td>Homoeopathic Hospital</td>
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<td>Diagnostic Imaging</td>
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<td>Laboratory Medicine</td>
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<td>Health Records</td>
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<td>Dental Hospital</td>
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<td>Nuclear Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estates &amp; Facilities (e.g. Catering, Domestic services, Telecoms, Waste Management)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women &amp; Children’s Services</td>
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**Team Phone Number**
0141 211 5112

Please leave a message if you are unable to speak to a member of staff
NHS Board
- Complaints about the NHS Board's functions
  NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
  J B Russell House
  Corporate Headquarters
  Gartnavel Royal Hospital
  1055 Great Western Road
  Glasgow
  G12 0XH
  Phone 0141 201 4477

Scottish Ambulance Service
To complain about the ambulance service in the Greater Glasgow area, contact:
General Manager
Scottish Ambulance Service (West Central Division)
Maitland Street
Glasgow
G4 0HX
Phone 0141 353 6001

To complain about the ambulance service in the Clyde area, contact:
General Manager
Scottish Ambulance Service (South West Division)
Maryfield Road
Ayr
KA8 9DF
Phone 01292 28 4101

NHS 24
To complain about NHS 24, contact:
Patient Customer Relations Department
NHS 24
Caledonia House
Fifty Pitches Road
Cardonald Park
Glasgow
G51 4ED
Phone 0141 337 4501

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR
Phone 0800 377 7330
Text message 07900 494 372
Email ask@spso.org.uk
Website www.spso.org.uk
Information about health rights

- **Confidentiality – it’s your right** explains how the NHS protects your personal health information.

- **How to see your health records** explains your right to see or have a copy of your health record.

- **The NHS and You** explains what you can expect from the NHS in Scotland, and what the NHS expects from you.

- **Consent – it’s your decision** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment.

- **Health care for overseas visitors** is a set of factsheets explaining what NHS services overseas visitors can expect to receive while they are in Scotland.

Information for young people

- **Consent – your rights** explains how you should be involved in decisions about your health care and treatment.

- **Confidentiality – your rights** tells you how the health service keeps information about you private.

- **Have your say! Your right to be heard** tells you how to give feedback or make a complaint about the NHS.

Information for carers

- **Caring and consent** explains your right to be involved in decisions about the health care of the adult you care for.

You can get this information from:

- GP and dental surgeries, hospitals and other places where you get NHS care

- the NHS helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)

- [www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk)

- your local citizens advice bureau (find your nearest bureau on the internet at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk) or in your local phone book).
We have tried our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct. However, the leaflet is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau or other advice agency.

Your comments please!

We want to know what you think about this leaflet. Please give us your comments:

- by post to HRIS, Consumer Focus Scotland, FREEPOST GW5277, Glasgow G1 3BR
- by emailing us at hris@consumerfocus.org.uk
- by visiting our website at www.hris.org.uk and clicking on the ‘contact us’ link, or
- by phoning us on 0141 226 5261.

Produced by Health Rights Information Scotland, a project of Consumer Focus Scotland, for the Scottish Government Health Directorates.
To get this leaflet in another language or format phone your local NHS Board on 0141 201 4915.