



## Complaints and the Health Service Ombudsman

Practice Management

When a patient is not satisfied with the service they have received they may feel they want to complain.

The NHS recommends they make their complaint early while the details are still fresh in their mind. They may make the complaint direct to the practice, use the local Healthwatch to assist them or complain to NHS England. They should explain why they are unhappy and how they want things put right.

The patient should give the practice and the NHS a chance to resolve the complaint. If the patient is not satisfied at the end of NHS procedures they can refer their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman.

This is a free service for the patient and is independent from both the NHS and Government. The Ombudsman will only investigate a complaint if the NHS procedures have been exhausted. The powers of the Ombudsman are statutory. When the Ombudsman investigates a complaint against a GP or practice, the GP and practice have an obligation to comply with the procedures and investigations.

If the Ombudsman rules that GP as an NHS provider has got things wrong, he will make recommendations to put things right which could include an apology (which the LMC recommends in another Advice Sheet) and sometimes a fine. It is debatable whether a fine is mandatory and what sanction there is. The Ombudsman make recommend adherence to contractual arrangements.

Contact details for the Health Service Ombudsman are:

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

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