

How to complain about the NHS Business Services Authority

This document explains how you can complain about certain services you may have received from the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA). This document provides a summary of the full NHSBSA Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure which is set out on our website at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaints

This document does not cover:

- the NHS Pensions formal complaints process – for more information on this go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-pensions
- complaints about the handling of information requests under the Data Protection Act or the Freedom of Information Act – for more information go to www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freedomofinformation.aspx

Complaints policy

It is the responsibility of each NHSBSA member of staff to provide excellent customer service.

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from us, our conduct, or a decision we have made on a course of action, you or your appointed representative with the required authorisation can make a complaint.

The following are examples of complaints:

- claims of unfair treatment
- dissatisfaction about how we have dealt with a situation
- claims that a poor standard of service has been provided
- claims that staff have been unhelpful or rude

If you do raise a complaint, the NHSBSA will deal with your complaint as quickly, fairly and thoroughly as possible.

We always view complaints, and feedback, as an opportunity to learn how we can improve our services. At times, the most appropriate action is to provide an explanation and extend a sincere apology. Where applicable, we will put things right and seek to ensure that the problem does not happen again.

Complaints procedure

To make sure that all complaints are handled efficiently, fairly, and consistently, we have a complaints procedure in place.

The procedure involves the different stages you need to take to resolve your complaint. The stages are as follows and must be completed in the order listed below:

1. informal complaint
2. formal complaint
3. appeal to the NHSBSA Chief Executive
4. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman/ Public Services Ombudsman for Wales [and/or] the Department of Health and Social Care

1. Making an informal complaint

What to do

You should contact us immediately, and in any event, no later than 90 calendar days after the incident you wish to complain about occurred.

You can get in contact with us in the following ways:



Via our webform www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us

- selecting the relevant service

- indicating 'Complaint' in the subject line



Via telephone by calling the relevant service you wish to complain about.



Or in writing to:

Customer Resolutions Team

Bridge House

152 Pilgrim Street

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE1 6SN

What happens next?

We aim to locally resolve your complaint within 10 working days.

If it looks like the complaint will take longer than 10 working days to resolve, we will keep you updated on a regular and consistent basis.

2. Making a formal complaint (Stage 1)

What to do

If you are unhappy with the local resolution provided at the informal stage and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact us straight away and not more than 90 calendar days after the date on your informal complaint response.



Telephone call

If you make a formal complaint by telephone, we will acknowledge this in writing within three working days.

You will then have seven working days to send us any further comments or information you think is relevant to the complaint.

If we do not hear from you within seven working days, we will consider the complaint information you provided to be accurate, and we will progress to the investigation stage.



Letter or email

If you send us a formal complaint by letter or email, we will send you an acknowledgement in writing within three working days of the date we receive your letter or email and we will progress to the investigation stage.

What happens next?

Investigation

An independent senior member of our Customer Resolutions Team will investigate the complaint on behalf of the Head of Service who will then review the investigation findings.



Response

You will receive a full written response from the Head of Service within 25 working days of receipt of your complaint.



Resolution or escalation

If you are satisfied with our response to your complaint, no further action is required. If you are dissatisfied with our response to your formal complaint, you have the right to make an appeal to the NHSBSA Chief Executive (Stage 2 complaint). Details of whom to contact to progress your case will be set out in the written response from the Head of Service.

3. Appeal to the NHSBSA Chief Executive (Stage 2)

If you remain dissatisfied after making a Stage 1 formal complaint and receiving our response, you can appeal the outcome to the NHSBSA Chief Executive.

What to do

You must raise your appeal to the Chief Executive in writing or verbally, within 90 calendar days of receiving our response to your Stage 1 complaint. Referrals to the NHSBSA Chief Executive after this time will not be considered.

When the NHSBSA receives a Stage 2 complaint, the Chief Executive will acknowledge receipt within three working days.

What happens next?

Investigation

The Chief Executive will allocate your appeal to an independent senior member of our Customer Resolutions Team who will investigate whether your complaint was fully addressed in the correct manner and in compliance with our complaint's procedure. This is to make sure that the complaint has been handled correctly and appropriately.

A Stage 2 review is unlikely to reinvestigate the whole complaint unless it is deemed necessary.



Response

The Chief Executive will send you a full written response within 15 working days from the date of receipt of your request.

If your complaint requires more time to resolve, the timescale may be extended. If any extension to the timescale is required, the Chief Executive will notify you of the reason for the delay as soon as possible (this will be within the timescales outlined).



Resolution or escalation

The referral of your appeal to the NHSBSA's Chief Executive is the last stage of the complaints procedure that is handled by the NHSBSA.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal to the Chief Executive you may escalate your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, details are set out in Part 4.

If your complaint relates to NHS Student Services you can escalate your complaint to the Department of Health and Social Care, details are set out in Part 5.

4. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's role is to investigate complaints where individuals feel they have been treated unfairly or have received poor service from public organisations such as the NHS. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or Public Services Ombudsman for Wales will not investigate any complaint made about the NHSBSA unless it has exhausted our complaints process first.

What to do

You can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman directly within six months of the date of our response to your Stage 2 complaint:



Via email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk



Via telephone 0345 015 4033



Or in writing to:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

You can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales directly within six months of the date of our response to your Stage 2 complaint:



Via email: ask@ombudsman.wales



Via telephone: 0300 790 0203



Or in writing to:

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae

Pencoed

CF35 5LJ

What happens next?

The Ombudsman will let you know if you can pursue the complaint.

As part of any investigation, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or Public Services Ombudsman for Wales will contact the NHSBSA directly for any relevant information. The NHSBSA will cooperate fully with the Ombudsman during the investigation.

The Ombudsman will contact you with their response.

5. NHSBSA Student Services

If you are an NHS Bursary, Social Work Bursary or Learning Support Fund student and you remain dissatisfied following the Chief Executive's review, you can escalate your complaint to the Department of Health and Social Care.

This is to comply with the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) NHS Bursary/Social Work Bursary/Learning Support Fund Rules.

What to do

Contact DHSC directly:



NHS Workforce Supply
Department of Health and Social Care
Quarry House
Leeds
LS2 7UE

Address your letter to the relevant department: NHS Learning Support Fund Appeal / NHS Bursary Appeal / Social Work Bursary Appeal

educationandtraining@dhsc.gov.uk



What happens next?

DHSC will let you know if you can pursue the complaint.

As part of any investigation, DHSC will contact the NHSBSA directly for any relevant information. The NHSBSA will cooperate fully with DHSC during the investigation.

DHSC will contact you with their response.

Additional information

Our commitment to you

We deal with all complaints fairly and impartially. We will consider any accessibility and reasonable adjustment requirements, recording any that we make.

If our trained complaints handler identifies at any time that anyone involved in the complaint may have experienced or is at risk of harm, they will discuss the matter with relevant colleagues and initiate safeguarding procedures.

The NHSBSA complaints procedure is underpinned by the following principles:

- easy to access and understand
- speedy, with time limits for action, keeping you informed at all stages of the process
- informative, so that feedback from complaints can be used to review our practices
- effective, ensuring all points raised are addressed positively and suitable solutions are provided
- regularly monitored
- fair to you and NHSBSA colleagues alike

We will maintain confidentiality, anonymising any complaint outcome data that may be published on our website.

We are committed to improving our services; senior management take an active interest and involvement in all sources of feedback and complaints to help us improve.

If an informal, Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint is made to us after the timescales stated, we may still be able to consider the complaint if it is still possible to do so.

If you behave unreasonably

In a very small number of cases, people can pursue their complaints in a way that is unreasonable.

Where necessary, we will take action to protect the wellbeing of our colleagues and the integrity of our complaints procedure.

The NHSBSA will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening, or other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

Anyone who continues to display these types of behaviours may be put under certain restrictions by the NHSBSA during or after the handling of a complaint. These measures may include:

- telephone calls being restricted
- contact limited to one form only (for example, a maximum of one letter a week)
- contact being required to take place with one named member of staff only
- an agreement about future behaviour before the complaint is progressed
- contact being managed with the help of an independent advocate.

If someone continues to behave unreasonably, despite restrictions being in place, the NHSBSA may decide to terminate contact with them and discontinue any further investigation into their complaint.

If at any time we see that a representative is not acting in the best interests of the person affected, we will assess whether we should stop our consideration of the complaint. If we do this, we will share our reasons with the representative in writing and advise them that they may complain to the Ombudsman if they are unhappy with our decision.