



CYNGOR IECHYD CYMUNED
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

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Writing your own complaint letter

- If you intend to send your own letter of complaint to an NHS organisation, you need to think and plan what you want to write. You may need to re-draft a letter several times to be sure it accurately reflects what you want to say.

- It is easier if letters are in clear handwriting or if they are typed but if you cannot do this then it should not deter you from complaining. You should not worry too much about spelling or grammar, the main issue is that the reader of the letter should be able to understand what has been written.

- The letter needs to clearly state some factual details eg
 - where did this incident occur?
 - who was involved in the complaint or incident?
 - when did this occur?
 - what happened?
 - what was the outcome?

Facts are important so that the whole matter can be investigated and looked at by someone who was not involved in the complaint incident itself.

- **If you do not have all the details, don't worry, as relevant information may be within your medical records.**
- **Consider what you want to achieve with your complaint. This may be clear to you but not to anyone else. If you want an apology, it is helpful to say so. If you need an explanation about something, this needs to be clear. If it is not clear what you want, the complaints process may not give you the outcome you are seeking.**
- **If you are going to complain about a number of issues, it may help if you identify the priorities from your perspective. Otherwise, a response may focus on something that you see as less of an issue.**
- **Keep the letter concise. Anything that goes on for pages can be difficult to understand and will not help the person reading and investigating your complaint. Try to use short and clear sentences.**
- **You may want to use a timeline of key events to help the reader understand the order in which things happened.**
- **It may help if you ask specific questions. Make these clear, for example, you may wish to number them.**

- **Check that you have not repeated yourself, as this can be distracting for the reader.**
- **It may be helpful to explain the emotional impact of the event(s) and how it made you feel but avoid aggressive or accusatory language.**
- **It may help to get someone else to read your letter, or read it aloud yourself to see if it reads sensibly or if it needs to be changed.**
- **Usually, complaint letters are sent to a specified individual or address. Check that you have this information so your complaint goes to the correct place.**
- **Put a date on your letter so that timescales can be monitored, keep a copy for your records and make a note of when it was posted.**
- **If you send any additional documents with your letter, keep the originals and send photocopies.**
- **If you do not receive an acknowledgement letter within a week of sending your complaint, check that your letter has been received.**
- **It may be helpful to use a file/large envelope to keep all your complaints paperwork together and in order.**

- If you include your telephone number on the complaint letter, this may indicate that you are willing to be contacted by telephone, you should not automatically expect a call.
- If you make or receive any telephone calls regarding your complaint, make a note of the date, time and who you spoke to along with details of what was discussed and any agreements reached. Keep this information together with your complaint paperwork
- If you include an email address on your paperwork, check your emails regularly to avoid missing anything of importance but do not assume there will be email contact. Keep copies of emails to refer back to.
- The organisation you are complaining to may need a consent/authorisation form completed by you before the matters can be investigated. If you receive one, try to return it promptly to avoid delays.

Finally, there is no 'correct style' for a letter and the above information is for guidance only. In the following two pages is an example of a typical complaint letter about a very specific event. Your own letter may be different, particularly if there are a number of issues being raised over a longer time period. Finally there is a page for you to record some information about your complaint.

Sample complaint letter for guidance

10 Anystreet
Anytown
Anyshire
Any postcode

Chief Executive
Name of Organisation
Address
Postcode

Date

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Your name/address/date of birth

I am writing to you to complain about the treatment I received at your hospital on 1st January 2017.

I went to the hospital at 2pm because I had injured myself in an accident at home. I had to wait five hours and during this time I was in a significant amount of pain and no one did anything to address this for me. By the time I was seen by Dr Medic and Staff Nurse Pain at 7.30pm, I was very distressed and I did not feel that they were particularly sympathetic.

Following my x-ray, when my wound was treated I was still not given any pain relief and on discharge I was not given the correct medication or advice about what I needed to do after leaving the hospital. I tried

to manage as best as I could at home, living on my own but it was very difficult.

A few days later I had to go and see my GP and a further x-ray showed that my thumb was broken and an infection had developed in my wound which could have been prevented. I am very upset that this happened as I had to take time off work to recover and I think that this was avoidable.

I would like to ask:

- a) Why was I not given any pain relief?**
- b) Who advised that there was no fracture present?**
- c) Why was I not given the correct information about after care or medication to take home**

I think that an apology is warranted for the failings and I feel that staff should be made aware of this incident so that no one else has to experience the same difficulties.

I therefore ask that this matter is treated as a formal complaint and investigated. If you wish to speak to me regarding this matter, my telephone number is

Yours sincerely

DETAILS ABOUT YOUR COMPLAINT:

Date you sent your letter:

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Date of acknowledgement:

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Name of person who is detailed on the acknowledgement letter as a point of contact:

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Any reference number that has been given:

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Any telephone number that you have been given for contact purposes:

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Any important times/dates that have been identified:

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