

Other useful Agencies



**Independent
Complaints
Advocacy**

Whilst making your complaint, you might find that you want to pursue other avenues or outcomes which lie outside the NHS Complaints process, such as disciplinary action. This short guide will act as an index of the agencies to approach and give you a brief outline of their role. Contacting these organisations or making a submission to them lies outside the remit of an advocate, for more information on this see the sheet “Advocacy support”. The contact details for all the organisations below can be found in the leaflet “Useful contacts and addresses”.

The General Medical Council – GMC

The primary role of the GMC is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public and ensuring standards of practise in medicine are met. They are the regulator of all doctors practicing in England, and maintain a register with details about behaviour, health or performance that could prevent them from doing their job. They will deal with concerns raised by members of the public who have doubts over a doctor’s fitness to practice, and you can approach them if you feel that a doctor requires disciplinary action.

They also work with medical schools to help devise the right curriculum and set the standards and values of doctors so they know how to behave with patients.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council – NMC

The NMC provide a similar role to that of the GMC. They set the standards for nurses and midwives to meet in their work, and have formulated a code of conduct which states how they must behave. Like the GMC, they also keep a register of all nurses and midwives in the UK and it is illegal to work as such without being on the NMC register. All nurses must prove annually that they fulfil the requirements for keeping their skills and knowledge up to date, and all midwives are supervised throughout their careers to ensure this. Any concerns about a nurses

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capabilities should be made to the NMC, and they will investigate and if necessary remove a nurse from the register for a period of time, or permanently if required.

The Health Professionals Council – HPC

The HPC is also a regulatory body set up to monitor a large number of other health care staff which you may come into contact with. They work to ensure a high standard of practise within the following professions;

Arts therapists, biomedical scientists, chiropodists, podiatrists, clinical scientists, dietitians, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, paramedics, physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists / orthotists, radiographers, speech and language therapists as well as social workers in England.

Should you have concerns regarding the fitness to practise of any of these, you can raise a complaint to the HPC. Action can be taken where necessary; including stopping someone from practising should there be sufficient concerns about their conduct.

General Dental Council - GDC

The GDC register dental professionals throughout the UK, including dentists, technicians, hygienists, dental nurses and orthodontists. They set the professional standards for them to follow and maintain a register of practitioners similar to the other regulatory bodies. Should you have concerns regarding a dentist's fitness to practice, you can approach them to raise your complaint about his, but they are unable to help with concerns about the costs of treatment.

General Optical Council – GOC

The GOC is the regulator for optical professionals in the UK including optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses. Their role is also to

protect the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. Any complaint about fitness to practice in this area should be directed to the GOC for investigation, and they will take any disciplinary action necessary.

Local Government Ombudsman – LGO

The Local Government Ombudsman looks at complaints about council services, such as education admissions, appeal panels and adult social care providers, such as care homes and home care providers. Their role is to investigate complaints in a fair and independent way, after this has been raised with the service provider. Should you have any queries about making a complaint to their offices, you can contact the LGO on 0300 061 0614.

AvMA – Action against Medical Accidents

AvMA is a charitable organisation who can provide legal and medical support and advice if you are considering taking your complaint down this route. They provide a free and confidential helpline service, can give information on your rights as a patient, or medical explanations, and provide you with information about compensation and clinical negligence. They can also make a referral to an appropriate solicitor for your individual case. You may find it useful to speak to them if this is something you are considering as there are time limits for making a legal claim as there are for making a complaint. They can also provide information about the Coroner and Inquests if you wish to speak to someone impartial about this.