

What if I only need information?

Not everyone needs the support of an Advocate to make their complaint. For example, some people just want to know how the complaint system works or know who they should send a letter of complaint to.

Everyone who contacts Healthwatch Advocacy for help with an NHS/Social Care Service complaint is entitled to receive a free Self Help Information Pack.

The Self Help Information Pack Includes:

- a detailed booklet on how the complaints system works
- information on how to access your medical records
- guidance on how to put together your complaint letter
- a leaflet containing useful addresses (including the Health Service Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman)

This may be enough to make the complaint yourself.

Anybody who starts a complaint by themselves is entitled to contact Healthwatch Advocacy at any stage in the process for more information or to request the support of an Advocate.

Can I complain on behalf of somebody else like a child, friend or relative?

You can complain on behalf of a child less than 18 years if they are unable to make the complaint themselves. The organisation you are complaining to must be confident the child cannot complain themselves before they consider the complaint.

You can also make a complaint on behalf of a friend or relative but they will need to agree to this in writing.

If you want to complain on behalf of someone who lacks mental capacity then it is usual that the organisation you are complaining to will check the patient's mental capacity before responding.

Meeting your needs

Healthwatch Advocacy can adapt the way we communicate with you depending upon your needs.

This might include any of the following:

- using an interpreter or translator
- using alternative formats for written correspondence including larger prints, audio or braille
- using British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters
- we can also supply our current information in 20 languages.

If you have particular needs, please let us know what these are and we will do our best to meet them.

What next? You can get in touch:

- if you want more information
- if you want a Self Help Information Pack to help you make a complaint, or
- if you want an Advocate to help you make an NHS/Social Care Service complaint

When are we open?

Monday –Thursday 9–7pm. Friday 9-5pm

Contact us

North East Lincolnshire Independent Complaints Advocacy
Healthwatch
Office G 5
E-Factor Enterprise Village,
Prince Albert Gardens
Grimsby
DN31 3AT
Office: 01472 361459
Email: nelica@carersfederation.co.uk

0808 802 3000

or visit www.carersfederation.co.uk/icanel



Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) is provided in North East Lincolnshire by Carers Federation Ltd. This service is commissioned by North East Lincolnshire Council.

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do you
have a
NHS or
Social Care
Complaint?

Your health. Your voice.

Healthwatch Advocacy helps people to make their NHS & Social Care Complaints

We can help if you feel you have not had the service you expect from the National Health Service (NHS) or Social Care Services and want to complain.

When your health care is provided by the NHS you are allowed to make a complaint using the NHS Complaints Process.

If you have a complaint about social care services you can make a complaint using the social services complaint process. It applies whether you or your local council are paying for your care.

An NHS complaint might include something that happened during care or treatment at:

- the hospital
- your General Practitioner (GP)
- the Dentist
- the pharmacist
- the optician
- an NHS funded care home

A Social Care Complaint could be about care:

- in a residential or nursing home
- personal care at home
- supported living services for someone with learning disabilities



What is Healthwatch Advocacy?

Healthwatch Advocacy is an Independent Complaints Advocacy service.

Healthwatch Advocacy provides practical support and information to people who want to make an NHS or Social Care complaint.

This might be giving information so you can pursue a complaint yourself or giving you the support of an experienced worker who can help you make your complaint.

In this area Healthwatch Advocacy is provided by the Carers Federation

Healthwatch Advocacy is:

- Free
- Independent of the NHS or Social Care Services
- Confidential

How does advocacy work?

Healthwatch uses advocacy to help people make their complaint

Advocacy is a system that uses experienced workers to help people speak up for themselves and represent their own thoughts and feelings when things are difficult.

Our specially trained and experienced staff are known as Advocates.

Because advocacy is about helping people to speak up for themselves, a Healthwatch Advocate will not tell you what to do or act on the wishes of others.

Our Advocates are qualified and have many years of experience working with the NHS/Social Care complaints process

What does a Healthwatch Advocate do to help?

Healthwatch Advocates will help you explore your options at every stage of your complaint and can give you information that can help you decide what to do.

Healthwatch Advocates work with you so that you feel confident to make a complaint



Throughout the complaints process an Advocate might also do some or all of the following:

- help you to compile all the issues you wish to raise in your complaint
- help you to write letters to the right people
- prepare you for meetings and go to these with you
- answer questions to help you make decisions
- give you the opportunity to speak confidentially to someone who is independent of the NHS/Social Care Services
- where possible we will meet you face-to-face to discuss your complaint
- provide you with information about how the NHS/Social Care Services complaint process works
- help you to monitor the progress of your complaint with the organisation or individual responsible
- help you to understand what you can expect to achieve from the NHS/Social Care service complaints process
- put you in touch with other people or services that might be able to help you