

Making a complaint about
a residential care home
or a nursing home in
Northern Ireland.



Northern Ireland

Public Services
Ombudsman

*Our ASSIST team is here to help.
If you need advice about making
a complaint to us, please call us on
Freephone 0800 34 34 24*



Who we are

The Ombudsman investigates complaints about public bodies in Northern Ireland. This includes organisations providing health and social care services such as hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians. It also includes residential care homes and nursing homes. An Ombudsman acts impartially, aiming to find out if the actions of an organisation have caused unfairness, harm or injustice. It is often seen as providing an alternative to court.



How we can help you

We can take a complaint from you, a family member, or someone else who you may wish to represent you, such as a solicitor or elected representative.

In relation to health and social care, the things we can look at include:

- poor care and treatment
- delay in care and treatment
- fees and charges
- assessments of need
- poor complaint handling



What to do if you have a complaint

You must firstly raise your complaint with the care home or nursing home, or with the Health and Social Care Trust which commissioned the care. If you are still not happy after this you can complain to the Ombudsman.



What happens when we receive your complaint?

If we can deal with your complaint, we will look at whether something has gone wrong. We will let you know if we can try to help both you and the care provider settle your complaint. We examine complaints without taking sides.

Sometimes, if the case is complex, we may need to carry out an investigation to find out all of the facts. To help us do this we are able to compel organisations to provide us with documents and to interview officials. Our investigations are private.

At the end of an investigation we will produce a report which will be sent to you and the organisation complained of.

We may also decide to publish an anonymised version of the investigation report.



What the outcome might be

We will decide either to:

- Uphold your complaint and recommend how the care provider can put things right. This could include an apology to you.
- Uphold your complaint but not make any recommendations because the care provider has already put things right or because we think the fault did not have a significant effect on you
- Not uphold your complaint



Need help?

If you have difficulty putting your complaint in writing or finding someone to help you, the Patient and Client Council (PCC) provides a free service to the public by giving assistance in making a complaint. They can be contacted at

<http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/>

or on 0800 917 0222.



How to contact the Ombudsman

By telephoning: 0800 34 34 24 (this is a Freephone number)

By E-mail to: nipso@nipso.org.uk

By writing to: Freepost NIPSO

By calling in person between 9:30 am and 4pm, at:

33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

By accessing the Office's website: <https://nipso.org.uk/>



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