

Help with your NHS Complaint – Sheet 10

Other useful organisations

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 is not normally something we can help you with.

The contact details for all the organisations below (and some other useful organisations) can be found at the end of this leaflet.

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 practising 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 practise, and you can approach them if you feel that a doctor requires disciplinary action. A report is produced each year which demonstrates the support patients are likely to need in making complaints. This can be found at:

http://www.gmcuk.org/publications/23435.asp?WT.mc_id=RLTC131016

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. All doctors must be familiar with and follow 'Good Medical Practice' and the explanatory guidance. This can be found at:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp?WT.mc_id=RLTC130422

A guide about what you can expect from your doctor has also been produced, which you may find helpful:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/patients.asp?WT.mc_id=RLTC130423

If you feel you need to make a complaint and want to contact the GMC direct, in addition to the telephone number shown later, they have a web-page with relevant information:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/21893.asp>

Teaching materials relating to dealing with patients with learning disabilities are produced for doctors, however GMC are keen for patients with learning disabilities and their carers/families to know what to expect from their doctors, and to make their feelings known if they don't think their doctors are treating them appropriately. This can be found at:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/learningdisabilities/>

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 nurse's capabilities should be made to the NMC, 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, dieticians, 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.

If 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 practise, you can approach them to raise your complaint about this, 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 practise 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 Public Health provision and 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 the legal 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.

It is possible to go through the official NHS complaints process and the legal route at the same time, although the NHS organisation may choose to put the NHS complaint on hold until the legal challenge has been completed.

Useful contacts and addresses

The Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Tel: 0345 015 4033
www.ombudsman.org.uk

General Medical Council

Regent's Place
350 Euston Road
London
NW1 3JN
Tel: 0845 357 8001
Switchboard: 0845 357 8001

Nursing & Midwifery Council

1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN
Fitness.to.practice@nmc-uk.org
Tel: 020 7637 7181

Health Professional Council

Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU
Tel: 0845 300 4472

General Dental Council

37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Tel: 0845 222 4141
E:Complaints@gdc-uk.org

General Optical Council

41 Harley Street
London
W1G 8DJ
Tel: 020 7580 3898
E: goc@optical.org

General Pharmaceutical Council

25 Canada Square
London
E14 5LQ
Tel: 0203 713 8000

Optical Consumer Complaints Service

PO Box 219
Petersfield
GU32 9BY
Tel: 0844 800 5071
E: postbox@opticalcomplaints.co.uk

National Patient Safety Agency

4-8 Maple Street
London
W1T 5HD
Tel: 01138 252 525
E: patientsafety.enquiries@nhs.net

The Law Society of England & Wales

Tel: 020 7242 1222
www.lawsociety.co.uk

Community Legal Services Direct

Tel: 0845 345 4345
www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Action Against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

44 High Street
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 1YB
Tel: 0845 123 2352
www.avma.org.uk

Data Protection Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113
www.dataprotection.gov.uk

Care Quality Commission

Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA
Tel: 03000 616 161
E: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
0300 061 0614
You can also text 'call back' to 0762 480 3014
www.lgo.org.uk

Tel: 0161 622 5700
Email: NHSComplaints@healthwatcholdham.co.uk
Web: www.healthwatcholdham.co.uk

