



Treat me well

Sorting out problems
with your hospital care



What is this booklet about?



Sometimes people are not happy with the way they are treated in hospital.



They might be unhappy because they have not been given the support they need.



This booklet tells you what to do if you are not happy with your health care.



It is about how to sort out a problem and how to make a complaint in hospital.



People can be unhappy with their care because:



- it was hard to understand what the hospital staff were saying



- they did not feel treated with respect



- they did not have enough time to speak up



- they asked for support but did not get it



- The hospital did not check what support they needed.



Why is it a good idea to speak up?



There are lots of reasons to speak up if you feel unhappy. Speaking up can:



- sort out a problem quickly



- stop the same thing from happening again



- make sure the hospital knows what happened so they can make changes



- help staff learn how to treat people with a learning disability better.



How do you sort out a problem?



There are different things you can do if you are unhappy with your hospital care.



1: Speak up as soon as you can



Tell the person treating you why you are unhappy and suggest how they could make it better.



You may not feel comfortable to say anything at the time, and that's ok.



You can talk to a friend, a family member, or someone else who supports you later.



2: Ask the hospital to fix the problem.



If you can't sort the problem out right away, you can speak to the hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (or PALS for short).



It is the PALS team's job to help patients sort out problems in the hospital.



They will do this by speaking with other people who work in the hospital.



Tell PALS as much as you can, like:

1. What happened?
2. When did it happen?
3. Where did it happen?

4. Who was involved?
5. What do you want the hospital to do to make things better?



You will find a PALS in most hospitals.



You can check if your hospital has a PALS by looking at the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk



3: Make a complaint

If PALS cannot sort out the problem, or if you still feel unhappy, you could make a **complaint**.



Every hospital has a complaints process you need to follow.



You will need to say:

1. What happened?
2. When did it happen?
3. Where did it happen?
4. Who do you want to complain about?



It will help if you can say what the hospital could do to make things better.



Making a complaint is a good way to be sure that the people who run the hospital know what went wrong.



If you need support with this, you can ask PALS or the **NHS Complaints Advocacy service** to help you.



The NHS Complaints Advocacy Service is **not** run by the NHS.



They can help you by:

- explaining how to make a complaint
- telling you who you should make your complaint to
- coming with you to any meetings about your complaint
- explaining anything you don't understand.



You can email them:
nhscomplaints@voiceability.org



Or call them:
0300 330 5454



Parliamentary
and Health Service
Ombudsman

4: Tell the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman



Parliamentary
and Health Service
Ombudsman

If you have made a complaint and you do not feel it was sorted out well, you can speak to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.



The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman make decisions about complaints which have not been sorted out by the NHS.

They can only help if:



- You have made a complaint and the hospital have given you their answer



- Or your complaint has not been sorted out after six months.



You can email them at:

phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk



Or call them on:

0345 015 4033



Or visit their website:

www.ombudsman.org.uk/complainforchange



5: Start a local campaign group!



If lots of other people are having the same problems with their hospital care, you could start a local campaign group together.



If you would like to start a local campaign, you can contact us at Mencap.



You can email us at:

campaigns@mencap.org.uk



Or call us on:

0207 696 5597



Or visit our website:

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning

Other people to talk to:



Healthwatch helps people to speak up about their healthcare.



They work with the health services in their area to make things better for patients.



They talk to other local Healthwatch groups to deal with problems that happen all over the country.



You can find out where your nearest Healthwatch is by looking on their website:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/find-local-healthwatch



Where can I find more information?



You can visit the Mencap website to find out more about getting good healthcare:



www.mencap.org.uk/health

You can also read our other guides:



Know Your Rights: Your rights in hospital



Know Your Rights: Getting the support you need in hospital



Thank you to PhotoSymbols for the pictures in this guide.