

What if I only need information?

Not everyone needs the support of an Advocate to make their complaint. For example, you might just want to know how the prison healthcare complaints system works or know who you should send a letter of complaint to.

Everyone who contacts VoiceAbility for help with a healthcare complaint can download, or be sent by email or post, 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.

This may be enough to help you make a complaint.

Even if you make a complaint yourself, you are still entitled to contact an NHS Complaints Advocate at any point in the complaints process. This might be to get more information or to request the support of an Advocate.

Contact us

You can get in touch:

- if you want more information
- if you want a Self Help Information Pack to help you make an NHS complaint, or
- if you need an Advocate to help you make an NHS complaint.

We are open Monday to Friday 9–5pm.

Visit our website for more details.

 **0300 330 5454**
Textphone: 0786 002 2939

 NHS Complaints Advocacy
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 nhscomplaints@voiceability.org

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Supporting your
voice in healthcare
inside, and outside,
of prison



Independent
Free
Confidential



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NHS Complaints Advocacy helps people to make a complaint about their healthcare

Healthcare in most prisons is provided by the NHS. Most medical care and treatment goes well, but things occasionally go wrong.

NHS Complaints Advocates can help if you have not had the care or treatment you expect to receive from your NHS Prison healthcare services and you want to complain.

What is NHS Complaints Advocacy?

Advocacy provides practical support and information to you if you want to make a complaint about the healthcare you receive in prison using the NHS complaints process.

This might mean giving information so you can pursue a complaint by yourself or giving you the support of an experienced Advocate who can help you to make your complaint.

NHS Complaints Advocacy is:

- **Independent of your NHS healthcare and Prison Services**
- **Confidential**
- **Free**

How does advocacy work?

VoiceAbility provides advocacy support to help people who want to make a complaint about their NHS healthcare.

Advocates support people to speak up for themselves and represent their own thoughts and feelings when things are difficult.

Advocates are specially trained in how to support you to make your complaint.

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

Meeting your needs

NHS Complaints Advocates can adapt the way they 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 for example easyread, larger prints, community languages or audio.
- Using British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.

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

What does an Advocate do to help?

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

Advocates will help you explore your options at the different complaint stages and can give you information that can help you to decide what to do.

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

- Give you the opportunity to speak confidentially to someone who is independent of your healthcare or prison services.
- Provide you with information about the Prison healthcare complaints process.
- Ensure you understand what you can expect to achieve from the Prison healthcare complaints process.
- Help you to compile the issues you wish to raise in your complaint.
- Help you to write your letter to the right people.
- Where appropriate meet you face-to-face to discuss your complaint.
- Prepare you for meetings and go to these with you.
- Help you to monitor the progress of your complaint with the organisation or individual responsible.
- Put you in touch with other people or services that might be able to help you.

