

The purpose of the Public Health Agency (PHA) is to protect and improve the health and social wellbeing of our population and reduce health inequalities through strong partnerships with individuals, communities and other key public, private and voluntary organisations.

Given the breadth of our work, it is important that we receive feedback to confirm what we are doing well and identify areas where we need to improve.

Complimenting the PHA

You can submit a compliment to the PHA by emailing compliments.pha@hscni.net

We will share your comments with the relevant staff member or team and use them to highlight good practice within the organisation.

Complaining to the PHA

Who can complain?

Any person who is dissatisfied with the work undertaken by the PHA can complain.

You can also complain on someone else's behalf, although you will generally need their consent.

How to complain?

You can submit a complaint to the PHA in a number of ways, including:

By email: complaints.pha@hscni.net

By letter:

Complaints Office
Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS

By telephone: 0300 555 0114

What details should you provide?

To help us progress your complaint, you should provide the following information:

- how to contact you;
- details of who or what you are complaining about;
- where and when the event that caused your complaint happened; and
- where possible, what action you would like us to take.

Timeframe for making a complaint

You should try to complain as soon as possible. The time limits for making a complaint are:

- within six months of the event;
- within six months of you becoming aware that you have cause for complaint, provided this is not more than 12 months after the event.

These limits can be extended if there are good reasons why you did not complain sooner.

What happens after I complain?

We will aim to acknowledge your complaint within two working days of receipt.

Within 20 working days we will aim to investigate your complaint and provide you with a response. Where this is not possible, we will contact you to provide an explanation.

Should you wish to seek clarity in relation to our response or express your continued dissatisfaction then please contact the Complaints Office within one month of receipt of response.

The role of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving our response to your complaint, you can refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about public service providers in Northern Ireland.

Further information on the services of the Ombudsman is available by contacting:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Freepost NIPSO

BELFAST

Freephone: 0800 343 424

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Website: www.nipso.org.uk

The role of the Patient and Client Council

Throughout the complaints process you also have a right to seek the help of the Patient and Client Council (PCC).

The PCC is an independent body, set up to represent your interests in Health and Social Care. They can provide free and confidential advice, information and help throughout the complaints process. They can help with writing letters, making phone calls, supporting you at meetings or bringing your complaint to the Ombudsman.

Further information about the PCC is available by contacting:

Freephone: 0800 917 0222

Online form: <https://pcc-ni.net/advocacy/>

Website: <https://pcc-ni.net/>

Complaining to other organisations

Complaints in relation to Health and Social Care Trusts

Each Health and Social Care Trust has a formal process in place to govern the management of complaints. Details of each organisation's complaint process will be available on their website.

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net>
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust www.northerntrust.hscni.net
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust <https://setrust.hscni.net>
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust <https://southerntrust.hscni.net>
- Western Health and Social Care Trust <https://westerntrust.hscni.net>

Complaints in relation to family practitioner services

If you have a concern or complaint about services provided by family practitioner services such as family doctors, dentists, pharmacists or opticians, you should in the first instance make your complaint to the practice or practitioner for local resolution.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group has a role as an intermediary or 'honest broker' in complaints regarding family practitioners and can be contacted by email: complaints.sppg@hscni.net or telephone: 028 9536 3893.

Care Opinion

If you want to share your experience of the PHA's work then you may wish to publish a story on Care Opinion. Further information on Care Opinion is available on their website:

www.careopinion.org.uk/info/about