

Making a Complaint About NHS Services in Cheshire and Merseyside

We want everyone who uses NHS services in Cheshire and Merseyside to feel listened to and treated with respect. If something has gone wrong, or you are unhappy with the care or service you received, you have the right to complain. Making a complaint will **not** affect your care in the future.

Before You Make a Formal Complaint

Many concerns can be sorted out quickly by:

- Speaking directly to the staff involved, or
- Contacting the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), who can help resolve issues informally.

If this does not work, or you would prefer, you can make a **formal complaint** under the NHS complaints procedure.

Who Can Make a Complaint?

You can make a complaint if you are:

- a patient who received NHS care or treatment, or
- someone acting on behalf of a patient, with their permission.

You can complain about **any NHS care or service** provided or funded by the NHS in Cheshire and Merseyside.

Who Should You Complain To?

You can complain either to:

- the organisation that **provided** the NHS service (for example, a hospital, GP practice, or community service), or
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB), which **planned and paid for** the service.

In most cases, it is quicker to complain directly to the organisation that provided the service. If you contact the ICB and they think the provider is best placed to respond, they will explain why and tell you who to contact instead.

How to Make a Complaint to NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB

You can make a complaint in the way that suits you best:

- **Online:** Use the complaints form on the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside website at <https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/contact/complaints/pre-questionnaire/>
- **By phone:** Call **0800 132 996**
- **By email:** enquiries@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk
- **By post:**
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB
No. 1 Lakeside
920 Centre Park Square
Warrington, WA1 1QY

What Happens Next if you complain to the ICB?

- your complaint will be reviewed to decide who is best placed to investigate it.
- you will be told how your complaint will be handled and what to expect.
- if you are unhappy with the response, you will be told what further options are available.

Getting Help to Make a Complaint

If you need help, you can ask for support from an **NHS Complaints Advocate**. Advocates are:

- free
- independent of the NHS
- able to help you write letters, prepare for meetings, or understand your options

Advocacy is available to anyone making a complaint about NHS care, including NHS-funded care provided by independent organisations.

More details can be found at:

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/contact/complaints/independent-complaints-advocacy-service/>

Accessible Information and Support

If you have communication or accessibility needs, support is available.

You can ask to:

- receive information in a different format (for example, large print or easy-read)
- get extra help to explain your complaint

There are also videos available, including:

- British Sign Language (BSL) videos explaining how to make a complaint
- Easy-read videos for people with a learning disability.

These resources are provided by the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman** and can help you understand your rights and options. You can find out more information at:

<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/making-complaint>