

What is NHS Complaints Advocacy? A short guide for you



Our NHS Complaints advocacy service is for all people living in the in the Reading area. If you need to make a formal complaint about an NHS service, we can help and support you.

We will do our best to make sure that how we do our work for and with you means that everyone has equal access to the service



At Healthwatch Reading we follow an advocacy ‘charter’ that explains how we will do advocacy for the public.

We act as an ‘advocate’ when we support you in making a formal complaint to an NHS organisation.



Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.

Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.

CONFIDENTIAL

Our service is independent and confidential. It is available to everyone in the Reading area who wants to make a complaint about an NHS service.

We put people first. We respect the needs, views and experiences of our advocacy clients.



We will listen to you and work with you to understand your concerns and needs. We will only do what you tell us to when contacting the NHS service you are complaining about.

We can support you to make telephone calls and write letters by talking about what to say or include. We can make calls for you and write letters for you - including only what you want us to say - if you need us to.



Diversity means: People are individuals, and we are all different. We all have both cultural and individual needs that should be respected.

Equality means: Our service is available to everyone, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

Sometimes people are fearful of making a complaint because they have experienced discrimination or fear it. Discrimination could be, for example, verbal disrespect, or denial of access to a health or care service that they need because of one or more of a person's personal characteristics.

Through advocacy we can support an individual to feel confident, to know what her or his rights are, and to make sure that their complaint is heard and dealt with fairly and properly.



Our advocates are prepared, trained and supported in their role. We have a written complaints policy and encourage feedback on our service.

We can talk to you in the way that meets your need best

- by telephone
- by email
- in person at our office
- a home visit may be possible, if it is difficult for you to come to our offices
- we can arrange a free interpreter for any meeting we have with you, if needed

We want you to know that

- our service is free and confidential
- we will take full and careful notes when we listen to you, and in any meeting we go to with you, so that we can keep a proper, confidential record of our work for you.

Keeping detailed records of our work helps us to do our work well, means staff can cover for each other at times of illness or holidays, and is a record for you if you have a complaint about our service.

To find out more

contact us at Healthwatch Reading

0118 937 2295 or info@healthwatchreading.co.uk

3rd Floor Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ

Note: the Advocacy Charter we follow was written by Action 4 Advocacy (an organisation that no longer exists), and is still the widely used national basis for advocacy standards. A full copy is available here
<http://www.aqv59.dsl.pipex.com/Advocacy%20Charter2004.pdf>