

**free  
independent  
support  
with making a  
health care  
complaint**

If you didn't receive the care you expect from the NHS, you have the right to make a complaint and be supported to make a complaint.

We can provide you with a trained advocate who can help guide you through the NHS complaints process to achieve a resolution.

Together we can help prevent others having the same experience in the future.

The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service is provided for residents of Surrey by Healthwatch Surrey in partnership with Surrey Independent Living Council.

### **What is Surrey Independent Living Council?**

Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) is a voluntary organisation led and run by disabled people. SILC offer a range of services to help people live independently.

### **About Healthwatch Surrey**

Healthwatch Surrey is an independent local watchdog that gives the people of Surrey a voice to improve, shape and get the best from health and social care services.

#### **Contact us**

Telephone:  
**01483 310500**  
9am-5pm Monday to Friday  
(except Bank Holidays)

Website:  
**www.surreyilc.org.uk**

Email:  
**nhsadvocacy@surreyilc.org.uk**

Text:  
**07704 265377**

**healthwatch**  
Surrey



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**healthwatch**  
Surrey

**Get  
free, independent  
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## What does an advocate do?

An advocate is an experienced person who can help and support you in making a complaint about an NHS service that you have received and are unhappy with.

Their aim is to ensure that:

- You are in control of decisions which are made about you
- Your experiences, views, wishes and feelings are heard
- You can contribute to improving the health and care services you use.

## What else can the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service do for me?

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

We can also help you pursue a complaint on your own. We will provide you with a free Self Help Information pack to help you manage your complaint.

Anyone who starts a complaint on their own can contact us for more information or to request the support of an advocate.



## If you would like to work with an advocate, we will:

- ✓ Help you with your complaint about an NHS service
- ✓ Put you in touch with other people who can help you
- ✓ Involve an interpreter or a translator, if you need one
- ✓ Meet with you where you feel comfortable if you are not able to visit our office or speak on the 'phone.

## Our advocates can:

- ✓ Help you write letters to the right people
- ✓ Go with you to meetings with medical professionals
- ✓ Give you the opportunity to speak confidentially to someone who is independent of the NHS
- ✓ Help you explore your options at every stage of the complaint
- ✓ Answer questions to help you make decisions
- ✓ Act on your direction rather than the wishes of others.

## What we cannot help you with:

- ✗ Help you to claim compensation
- ✗ Get an NHS employee disciplined
- ✗ Give legal advice
- ✗ Help you with complaints about private medical treatment
- ✗ Give medical advice
- ✗ Provide counselling.

## Meeting your needs

We can adapt how we communicate with you depending on your needs.

This might include:

- using an interpreter or translator
- using alternative formats e.g. braille or larger print
- using British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.

Please let us know what your particular needs are and we will do our best to help.

