



Introduction

This Fact sheet is about Independent Community Health Providers providing services funded by the NHS. It should be read together with our general information booklet about our service.

Independent Community Health Providers can include community dentists, opticians or pharmacists who are providing you with a service under contract to the Local Health Board. You should note that the Ombudsman can only consider complaints about care funded by the NHS; he cannot look at community treatment provided on a private basis.

Independent Community Health Providers may work as sole practitioners, with other practitioners as part of a practice, or as part of a larger company. Practice staff, such as receptionists or nurses, are generally employed by the practice (or company), which will be responsible for their actions.

What the Ombudsman can do

The Ombudsman can:

- Consider complaints about the standard of clinical care provided to you, your child, or someone you represent;
- Consider complaints about administrative failure , or other poor service provided on behalf of the NHS;
- Consider complaints that you have been refused NHS dental treatment without being given a proper reason.

What the Ombudsman cannot do

The Ombudsman cannot:

- Stop a dentist or optician or pharmacist from practising – although if the investigation does suggest that there are serious concerns about professional competence, the Ombudsman may notify the relevant regulatory body;
- Intervene in your current treatment, obtain a second opinion for you, or arrange for you to be given an alternative treatment if the current type of treatment being offered is reasonable;
- Insist that you are seen at a particular dental practice or optician.

Issues to bear in mind

You have no entitlement to be seen by a particular Independent Community Practitioner, though in practice people are often seen by the same dentist or optician. There are also a number of instances where dentists are entitled to refuse to treat NHS patients whose treatment they have already started; for example, when the practitioner feels that the professional relationship between the dentist and the patient has broken down. In such cases, you should be given reasons as to why treatment is being refused. Treatment should not normally be refused because you have made a complaint.

When considering complaints about the standard of clinical care received from a dentist, optician or pharmacist, the Ombudsman will assess whether the care provided was of a [appropriate standard](#) in the circumstances present at the time.

Further information

Your local **Community Health Council (CHC)** can provide free help and support to you in making a complaint about an NHS service. Contact details for your local CHC, and details of the service that they provide, can be obtained from the [website](#) of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales or by contacting them on **0845 6447814 or 02920 235558**.

Your **Local Health Board** may also be able to help you. Contact details for the various Health Boards in Wales can be found at www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/directory

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found in the 'Ombudsman's Casebook' which is in the publications section of our website. Please see www.ombudsman.wales.

Contact us

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#).

Easy Read

Dentists, Opticians and Pharmacists

 [Download](#)

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