



Introduction

This Fact sheet is about complaints about General Practitioners (GPs). It should be read together with our [‘How to Complain’](#) webpage, available on the ‘Making A Complaint’ tab.

There is a separate fact sheet which covers other independent primary care providers like community dentists, opticians, or pharmacists. You should note that the Ombudsman can only consider complaints about care provided under the NHS; he cannot look at treatment provided on a private basis.

Practice staff, such as nurses or receptionists, are employed by GPs, who are responsible for their actions. Any complaint about practice staff should be directed to the GP practice in the first instance.

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 you have received from your GP Practice;
- Consider complaints that you have been incorrectly removed from a GP Practice list;
- Consider complaints about out-of-hours services (usually these are provided by private companies on behalf of the relevant Health Board).

What the Ombudsman cannot do

The Ombudsman cannot:

- Stop your GP from practising – although if his investigation suggests 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 treatment you are currently receiving is reasonable;
- Reinstate you on to the Practice list if you have been removed.

Issues to bear in mind

When considering complaints about clinical care, the Ombudsman will assess whether the standard of care was [appropriate](#) in the circumstances at the time, rather than of a “gold standard”.

There are a number of circumstances where GPs are entitled to remove patients from their list for example, when a patient moves away from the Practice’s area, or when the professional relationship between doctor and patient has broken down. You should normally be given a written warning before being removed from the list and given reasons for why you are being removed. You should not normally be removed from a Practice list simply because you have made a complaint.

Complaints about NHS out-of-hours services should normally be directed to the relevant Health Board in the first instance (see below for contact details).

Further information

Your **local Community Health Council (CHC)** can provide free help and support with making your complaint. Contact details for your local CHC can be obtained from the website of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales or via their helpline on **0845 6447814**.

Your **local Health Board** may also be able to help you. Contact details for the Health Board for your area can be found at www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/directory

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website, [on the ‘Publications’ tab under ‘Our Findings’ & ‘The Ombudsman’s Casebook’](#).

Contact us

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

Also available in Welsh.

Easy Read

GPs

 Download

This document is available in Welsh and English. You can write to us in Welsh and we will reply in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

ask@ombudsman.wales 0300 790 0203 Our phone line is open from 10am-4pm