

What if I only need information?

Not everyone needs the support of an Advocate to make their complaint. Some people just want to know how the complaint system works or know who they should send a letter of complaint to.

Healthwatch Cheshire ICAS can provide information or advice on such subjects as:

- How the complaints system works
- Guidance on how to put together your complaint letter
- Addresses of who to send your complaint to
- How to access your medical records
- What to expect at a resolution meeting.



This may be enough to make a complaint for yourself. Anybody who starts a complaint by themselves can at any time during the complaints process contact us for more information or to request the support of an Advocate.

Contact us

Healthwatch Cheshire CIC
Sension House
Denton Drive
Northwich
Cheshire
CW9 7LU

0300 323 0006

www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk

Email: info@icascheshire.org.uk

 @HealthwatchCW

 @HealthwatchCE

healthwatch

Cheshire West

healthwatch

Cheshire East



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Do you have a complaint about the NHS?

Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service for Cheshire

Can I make a complaint?

When your health care is provided by the NHS you are allowed to make a complaint using the NHS complaints process.

An NHS complaint might include something that happened during care or treatment at a:

- Hospital
- GP Surgery
- Dentist
- Pharmacist
- Optician
- NHS funded care home.

Healthwatch Cheshire CIC offers an NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS). ICAS advocacy works within the NHS complaints regulations and can help you to use the NHS complaints process to have your voice heard.

The NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service is:

- Free
- Independent
- Confidential.



What does an ICAS Advocate do?

An ICAS Advocate provides practical support and information to people who want to make an NHS complaint.

This might mean providing you with information so you can pursue a complaint by yourself or work with you to make your complaint.

Advocacy is about helping people to speak up for themselves so an advocate will not tell you what to do.

ICAS Advocacy can:

- ✓ Support anyone to make a complaint about the service, care or treatment provided to them, or someone else, by the NHS.
- ✓ Listen to your concerns.
- ✓ Signpost you to the right organisation for you.
- ✓ Provide a step by step guide to the complaints process, answer any questions, explain your options, and offer some tips.
- ✓ Provide you with practical help to make your complaint and support you through the process.
- ✓ Support a young person under 16 if they have capacity to reach their own decisions. If a child does not have the capacity to make a decision about their treatment, only a parent or guardian may complain on behalf of their child without permission.

- An advocate will work with you so that you feel confident to make a complaint.
- An advocate can help you with writing letters or write a letter on your behalf.
- Prepare you for meetings and go to these with you.
- Contact and speak to people within the health service on your behalf.

ICAS Advocacy can't:

- × Usually work on complaints that are over 12 months old unless you have only just found out that you have cause for complaint, or have some other good reason for not complaining sooner.
- × Investigate complaints.
- × Give legal advice.
- × Give medical advice.
- × Provide counselling.
- × Help with issues not covered by NHS complaints regulations, such as privately funded treatment, personnel matters, such as staff discipline or contractual matters.
- × Help with legal action and matters relating to compensation.
- × Provide a secretarial service.