

How we use information from patient complaints about NHS care

People sometimes come to us for help when they have a complaint or concern about their care from the NHS, because we are the sector regulator for health services in England. We take complaints about care very seriously, but our duties do not include resolving individual complaints about NHS organisations. We know people can get frustrated that we cannot resolve individual complaints so this leaflet is designed to explain what we do with the information from complaints.

For information about what we can do to help you make a complaint, please see our leaflet '[Complaints about healthcare services](#)'.

Monitor's role

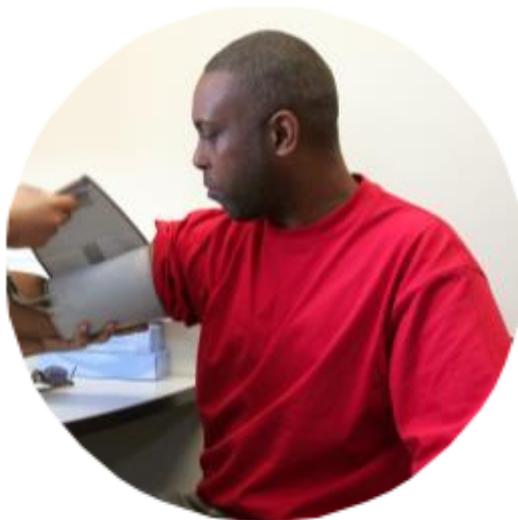
Our role is to make the health sector work better for patients. We have a number of functions, although the concerns and complaints we receive are generally about our role as the regulator of NHS foundation trusts. We make sure foundation trust hospitals, ambulance trusts and mental health and community care organisations are well led. We also assess NHS trusts to see if they are ready to become foundation trusts, which means they can make more decisions independent of the Department of Health.

You can find lists of [NHS foundation trusts](#) and [NHS trusts we are assessing](#) on our website: www.gov.uk/monitor.

Complaints about NHS foundation trusts

Every NHS foundation trust has a licence to operate which requires them to be well run by their board of directors. So if you make a complaint to us about an NHS foundation trust we will consider whether it could signal underlying problems with how the trust is run.

If we decide it does, we will consider whether the problems suggest the foundation trust may not be fulfilling the conditions of its licence. We may contact a trust directly as a result but we consider each case individually.



In the past we have contacted foundation trusts about allegations of abuse (of staff or patients), possible misconduct of board members and governors, failure to deliver the care set out in a healthcare plan and failure to follow correct procedures for national reporting of performance.

We also gather intelligence and may discuss issues arising from complaints with Local Healthwatch and other parties at local Quality Surveillance Groups.

We are not likely to look into issues such as cancelled or rescheduled appointments and operations, poor record-keeping or other administration concerns.



Working with the Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the NHS regulator of the safety and quality of patient treatment and care. Like us they don't resolve individual complaints but they can use what they learn to assess the standard of care. If we receive complaints about serious safety or quality issues we pass them to CQC and any other relevant body, and we will then follow up what has been done with the information. If they find that a foundation trust is failing to provide good quality care, we get involved and act to make sure the problem is fixed.

Complaints about NHS trusts

When NHS trusts apply to us for foundation trust status we expect them to have robust systems for reviewing and learning from complaints and serious incidents. If we receive complaints about an NHS trust which is applying for foundation trust status, we will take this into account in our assessment process and will also pass the complaint on to CQC and the NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA). TDA provides support, oversight and governance to NHS trusts that are not foundation trusts.

For more information contact:

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