

INFORMATION SHEET 5



Making a complaint



Anyone using a service has a right to complain if they feel that their interests are not being met or considered. You may want to complain, if you think you have not been treated fairly or politely, something has not been done that should have been done or it was done badly. Nothing will ever improve, if people using services don't make their views known.

Many organisations will have their own complaints procedures and will let you have printed information about them and the steps you will have to take to put the process into operation.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL COMPLAINTS

Try to sort things out with the person involved or their manager in the first instance. Don't be afraid of saying you are not happy with the service being provided, or the fact that it does not meet your needs

If you are not satisfied with the response you may be able to take the complaint to a review panel or to a higher authority such as the Ombudsman. Your local Councillor or Member of Parliament may also be able to assist you.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

A booklet called has been published by the borough called "How to Complain about our Services" This can be accessed by:-

- Phone **020 8554 5000**.
- On line www.redbridge.gov.uk
- By email letter or fax. Write to the member of staff you have been dealing with or their manager.
- Fill in the complaints form on the back of the leaflet

You should receive a reply a reply within 10 days. If you are not happy with the reply you should contact the Head of Service (the Customer Contact Centre on **020 8554 5000** will tell you who this is) The Head of Service will investigate and respond within 20 working days.

If you are still not satisfied you can write to the ombudsman at:

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Tel: 0845 0154033

COMPLAINTS ABOUT NHS TREATMENT INCLUDING DOCTORS AND DENTISTS

If you are unhappy with a service you have received from the NHS you are entitled to make a complaint.. A complaint should be made within 6 months of the event. The first stage of NHS complaints is called "Local Resolution". Your complaint should be made to the organisation or primary care practitioner providing the service.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint you can ask the Health Commission for an Independent Review. You can contact the commission at:-

Healthcare Commission
London Head Office
Finsbury Tower
103-105 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8TG
Tel: 020 7448 9200

If you are still unhappy contact:-

HealthService Ombudsman
Millbank tower
Millbank
London Sw1P 4QP
Tel: 0845 015 4033

Can you get some help?

Help to make a complaint can be obtained from The Patient Liaison Service PALS. They will help you to get the best from services run by The Primary Care Trust. PALS can advise patients, families and carers, listen to concerns, suggestions and queries about health services. PALS can also help to sort out difficulties at the earliest possible stage, providing a speedy resolution to any problems.

You may also get help and information from:-

Redbridge and Waltham Forest Health Authority
Becketts House
2-14 Ilford Hill, Ilford IG1 2QX
Tel: 020 8478 5151

COMPLAINTS ABOUT OPTICIANS

Opticians also have their own systems for handling complaints. Complaints should be made direct to the optician concerned. If the matter cannot be resolved then you should write to:

The Optical Consumer Complaints Service
PO Box 4685, London SE1 6ZB
Tel: 020 7261 1017

COMPLAINTS ABOUT OTHER ORGANISATIONS

You should find out who the manager of the service is and write to them initially. Redbridge Carers Support Service will be happy to advise you who to write to if you are unsure who manages a service.

LOCAL COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Your local Councillors and MPs will have regular advice surgeries. These are usually advertised in the local paper, or libraries.

Councillors and MPs can take up complaint issues not only with local authorities but also with other authorities. They will make sure you receive an answer to any complaint.

TAKING IT FURTHER - GETTING LEGAL ADVICE

If you wish to take things further e.g. have a Judicial Review in the High Court, you will need to speak to a legal adviser. You can receive advice from:

Citizens Advice Bureau
Tel: 0870 1264140