

Factsheet B28: How to complain about rights to benefits or services

There are many decisions that are taken by other people about your right to benefits or services. Sometimes you may be unhappy about the decision they have reached, in which case you might need to ask them to reconsider their decision or you might want to appeal the decision.

Please see <https://equallives.org.uk/info-and-advice/welfare-and-benefits/challenging-decisions-when-youre-unhappy/> if you want to challenge decisions about benefits.

If you want to make a complaint about healthcare or treatment issues, DWP or their benefit Assessment Providers, or HMRC, please see this page: <https://equallives.org.uk/info-and-advice/legal-rights/when-things-go-wrong/>

If your complaint is about a Personal Budget, please see this page <https://equallives.org.uk/info-and-advice/care-and-support/personal-budgets/> where, in the list of downloads, you will find a description of the complaints process as well as a complaints template letter and a sample complaints letter.

There may be times when you have felt unhappy about how you have been treated by the people making decisions about you. In that case, it is a good idea to make a complaint. It is not just about what you think of their decisions,



because it is quite possible that they may be applying rules or laws that you do not agree with. You might not agree with a decision, but it would still be right if it was correct within the rules or the law.

This is about whether you have been dealt with fairly, and have been treated with courtesy and respect. At the very least, you have the right to be treated with empathy, dignity and respect throughout all of your dealings with people who are paid to make decisions or provide services. You can expect that they carry out their job responsibly and professionally.

Most organisations will have a published formal complaints procedure. If you need help to find out what to do, and help to actually make the complaint, please contact our information and advice service.

We have guidance on our website about specific types of complaint if you follow the suggested links. Some of the examples you will find on our website include:

- Complaining about a medical assessment by:
 - Atos Healthcare (or IAS)
 - Capita or
 - Maximus (or CHDA)
- Complaining about your GP or health services provided by the NHS
- Complaining about Social Services
- Complaining to the Care Quality Commission
- Complaining about access to support in education
- Complaining about your local authority
- Complaining to a government department, such as the Jobcentre, the Disability and Carers Service, or the Pensions Service



- Complaining to the Independent Case Examiner
- Complaining to your MP
- Complaining to the Ombudsman:
 - Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
 - Local Government Ombudsman
 - Housing Ombudsman
 - Financial Ombudsman
 - Legal Ombudsman
 - Pensions Ombudsman
- Complaining about the service you receive from Equal Lives

There will be many occasions when a simple letter explaining what has gone wrong will be sufficient to put things right. It is helpful if you can be clear about what you actually want to happen; this might just be a change in what is being provided, but it might also be an apology or perhaps some compensation. You may need qualified legal advice to find out what you could be entitled to.

You will find further information on our website, with contact details for the types of complaint mentioned above. If you need assistance to make a complaint about any issue linked to illness, disability or care needs, please contact our information and advice service by phoning us on 01508 491210 or email info@equallives.org.uk

We try very hard to maintain the highest of standards in our work, but if your complaint is about Equal Lives, we promise to listen to you and investigate any issues you are unhappy about. Please see this page: <https://equallives.org.uk/contact-us/complaints/>



If you require further information or would like this Factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ.

