

## How to make a good complaint

When you buy goods or services, you have certain rights. These include getting products of good quality, receiving services on time, and being treated well as a customer (known as customer care).

See [Consumer advice](#) for more information on your rights as a consumer and what to do if you have problems with products or a service.

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### When to make a complaint

If you're unhappy with the goods or services you received, you can make a complaint. In some cases, you may also be able to return the goods and get a refund.

You should check with the organisation to see if they have a complaints procedure. Most companies have one on their website. There are some useful tips below on how to write a good complaint letter or email to make sure you get all of the issues across effectively and get the best outcome.

Below are some tips to help you write a clear and effective complaint letter or email to make sure your issues are understood.

There are organisations in Newcastle who can help you if goods or services that you have bought are dangerous or unsafe.

If you believe you have been the victim of unfair trading practices such as cold calling, online scams, overcharging for work or deliberately misleading you, check the [Citizens Advice](#) website for advice..

If you think you've been the victim of unfair trading such as cold calling, online scams, overcharging, or misleading information visit the [Citizens Advice](#) website for advice.

If you have concerns about the safety of a product you can also report it to [Trading Standards at Newcastle City Council](#).

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### How to complain effectively

Most organisations have a customer services department that you can complain to, if not contact the head of the organisation.

- **Act quickly.** This gives the organisation an opportunity to try to fix the problem for you.

- **Keep evidence.** Keep receipts, dates and times of phone calls, a record of who you spoke to, quotations, contracts, emails, a guarantee or warranty.
- **Get supporting evidence.** Take photographs or video of any damaged goods or products for your complaint

There are 4 main ways to complain:

- in person
  - by telephone
  - by letter
  - online or by email
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## Complaining by telephone

- have all of the information that you need ready.
  - speak to the person in charge; (the manager or owner) if possible
  - explain what the problem is calmly and clearly
  - make notes of the date, time, who you speak to.
  - If possible ask for a transcript of your call or a summary by email
  - make notes of what was said during your telephone conversation
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## Complaining in writing

Writing a letter or email can be easier if you don't want to speak to someone in person or by phone. Writing a letter or email can help you to make your complaint carefully and clearly. It also gives you a record of your complaint so you can refer back to it as the complaint progresses.

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## Writing a good complaint letter or Email

1. Be clear, concise and keep to the facts.
2. Include key details about the product or service that you bought or received. Such as the date/time of the issue, location, name of person on duty, name of product, what the problem was, your account number, model number, price, warranty information and reference number.
3. Explain clearly what the problem is
4. Explain how it affected you and how you are disappointed with the service. Be firm but avoid personal comments or attacks on the company or staff.
5. Say what you would like to be done to fix the problem. This could be an apology, a refund, a repair or a replacement product or staff training so it doesn't happen again.
6. Give a date for them to respond. This is usually 14 to 15 days, but may be up to 30 days. Some services such as financial services have up to 8 weeks to respond to you. Check their customer service or complaints policy to find out.

7. Remind them of consumer laws. If the goods or services did not meet the legal requirements you can also mention the [Supply of Goods & Services Act](#) and the [Sale of Goods Act](#).
8. Include the details of extra costs or expenses you've had because of the problem or issue. Include any receipts that show these extra costs
9. Date the letter and say how they should contact you
10. Send recorded delivery for a postal letter or use read receipt or delivery receipt settings for Email, so you have record of when you sent your complaint.
11. Keep copies of all of the emails that you send and receive. Keep original documents and make copies..

## After your complaint

The organisation may offer an apology, a refund, a repair or a replacement. You can choose to accept this offer or ask for more to be done. If you accept you will probably not be able to ask for more or extra compensation later. If you are unsure, you should get advice from [Citizens Advice](#)

## If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint

If you are not happy with the response from the organisation or it doesn't solve your problem there are other ways that you can complain.

- Add details of what you've already tried in your complaint process (letters, phone calls, emails).
- Contact the complaints or customer service department again.
- Ask to speak to a manager.

## Independent organisations you can complain to

If you need to take your complaint further, some organisations or professions are governed by an independent body who you can direct your complaint to. They are often called an ombudsman. Here's a list of independent services that can help you to make a complaint:

Type of complaint	Independent organisation
Care services	<p><b><a href="#">Care Quality Commission (CQC)</a></b> is the independent regulator of care services. This includes Hospitals, Care Homes, Dental, Home Care agencies, Mental Health, GP surgeries</p>

Consumer Rights	<p><a href="#"><u>Trading Standards</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Citizens Advice Newcastle</u></a></p>
Energy Services: gas and electricity suppliers	<p><a href="#"><u>Ombudsman Services: Energy</u></a></p>
Finance	<p><a href="#"><u>The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)</u></a></p>
Health Services	<p><a href="#"><u>Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</u></a> are a free, confidential, NHS advice service. They help patients, their families and carers give feedback on NHS services.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>The Patients Association</u></a> is the national telephone and email helpline for anyone trying to navigate health and social care systems in the UK</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Parliamentary and health service Ombudsman</u></a> independently investigate complaints about UK government departments and the NHS in England.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Healthwatch Newcastle</u></a> offer free, confidential and independent information about health and social care services</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Patient Safety Commissioner</u></a> promotes patient safety with medicines and medical devices. They want to hear from patients about your experiences to help improve the healthcare services for everyone. Contact the commissioner to share your experience. Your feedback will help improve health care.</p>
Housing services	<p><a href="#"><u>Housing Ombudsman Service</u></a></p>
Legal services	<p><a href="#"><u>Legal Ombudsman</u></a> can help you to complain about legal services</p>

Social Care	<p><a href="#"><u>Local Government Ombudsman</u></a> looks at complaints about councils and some other organisations. They can help with complaints about education admissions appeal panels and adult social care providers (such as care homes and home care providers).</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Parliamentary and health service Ombudsman</u></a> independently investigate complaints about UK government departments and the NHS in England.</p>
Television Service	<a href="#"><u>Ofcom</u></a>
Trades people	<a href="#"><u>Trading Standards Institute</u></a>
Welfare Benefits	<a href="#"><u>Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</u></a>

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## What happens if my complaint is still not resolved?

If your complaint is still not resolved, or the organisation does not reply to your complaints, you may consider legal advice and taking legal action in the small claims court.

- get independent [legal advice](#)
- contact your [local court](#) for information on how to start your claim. You can also start a claim online at Her Majesty's Courts Service's [Money Claim Online](#).
- if there has been an injury or a criminal offence, contact [Citizens Advice](#) for further advice before doing anything more with your complaint.

Taking an organisation or trader to court should be your last option. Even if you win, there may be costs involved.

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## Advocacy – Get your voice heard

Advocacy is free, independent support to help you to get your voice heard. Advocacy services match you with an independent advocate who is on your side if you need support. They can:

- help you to find information
- talk things through with you to find out what you want
- support you to get your views across at appointments and meetings
- help you to understand your rights

**There are a range of advocacy services in Newcastle** if you are having problems understanding or arranging care or health services such as:

- Adult Social Care
  - Community support
  - Mental Health or do not have the mental capacity to make decisions for yourself
  - NHS Health Care
  - Dementia advocacy
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## **Have your say about health services**

You can help to improve our health services. You can volunteer to take part in groups or forums to make sure the views of patients, carers and the public are heard. Your feedback is used to improve health services in the North East of England.

[Read more about how you can have your say about health services.](#)

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## **How to make a complaint or compliment about other Newcastle City Council Services**

[Complaints and Compliments at Newcastle City Council](#) can help if you are not happy with the service that you receive from the Council, or if you feel that something has gone wrong. If something has gone well, you can send them a compliment about the service too. Your feedback helps to improve the services.

Visit their website for more details about how to make a complaint or send a compliment about these services:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- schools
- Councillors
- housing
- all other council services such as, bins and roads

Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council works together with people using their services to help improve, design and evaluate them. You can find out more about how they do this and how to take part [on their website](#)

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## **Other useful information**

[Resolver](#) is a free website that helps you make complaints online. The website will take you through the complaints process step by step, explain your rights to you and help you write an email of complaint.

[Which? Consumer Rights](#) provide a list of free complaint template that you can use.

**Trading Standards** have a consumer help page with lots of information and advice on problems with a purchase.

**The Financial Ombudsman** has a guide on how to make a complaint about financial services. They also have a complaint checker that can help you with making a complaint to the Ombudsman [on their website](#)

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## Useful Organisations

### Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

**Email:** [citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk](mailto:citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk)

**Website:** <http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk>

**Telephone:** 0808 223 1133

**Address:** 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

### Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)

**Email:** [consumer.queries@fca.org.uk](mailto:consumer.queries@fca.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0800 111 6768

**Address:** 25 The North Colonnade, E14 5HS

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

**Email:** [pals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@nhct.nhs.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/what-is-pals-patient-advice-and-liaison-service/>

**Telephone:** 0800 032 0202

**Address:** Freepost PALS,

### Complaints and Customer Relations Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council

**Email:** [ComplaintsAdults@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:ComplaintsAdults@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/information-and-support-adults/contact-care-and-support-adults/make-a-complaint>

**Telephone:** 0191 277 7427

**Address:** Complaints and Customer Relations, Adult Care and Support, NE1 8PA

## **Trading Standards – Newcastle City Council**

**Email:** [tradingstandards@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/tradingstandards>

**Telephone:** 0191 277 7427

**Address:** Newcastle Civic Centre, NE1 8QH

## **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

**Email:** [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 061 6161

**Address:** CQC National Customer Service Centre, NE1 4PA

## **Ofcom**

**Website:** [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 123 3333 or 020 7981 3040

**Address:** Riverside House, SE1 9HA

## **Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS)**

**Email:** [complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0800 023 4567

**Address:** South Quay Plaza, E14 9SR

## **Complaints and Compliments at Newcastle City Council**

**Website:** <https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/complaints-compliments>

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

**Address:** Complaints at Newcastle, NE99 2BN

## Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

**Website:** [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 061 0614

**Address:** PO Box 4771, CV4 0EH

## Citizens Advice

**Website:** [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0808 223 1133

**Address:** Citizens Advice, EC1A 4HD

## Trading Standards Institute

**Website:** <http://www.tradingstandards.uk/advice/index.cfm>

**Telephone:** 03444 111 444

## Legal Ombudsman

**Email:** [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.legalombudsman.org.uk](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 03444 111 444

**Address:** Legal Ombudsman, SL1 0EH

## Money Claim Online

**Email:** [ccbc@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ccbc@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.moneyclaim.gov.uk](http://www.moneyclaim.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 123 1057

**Address:** 4th Floor St Katharine's House, NN1 2LH

## Ombudsman Association

**Email:** [secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org](mailto:secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org)

**Website:** [www.ombudsmanassociation.org](http://www.ombudsmanassociation.org)

**Telephone:** 0300 123 1057

**Address:** Leonard House, BR1 1RJ

## Energy Ombudsman

**Email:** [enquiry@energyombudsman.org](mailto:enquiry@energyombudsman.org)

**Website:** <http://www.ombudsman-services.org>

**Telephone:** 0330 440 1624

**Address:** PO Box 966, WA4 9DF

## Resolver

**Website:** <http://www.resolver.co.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0330 440 1624

## Which? Consumer Rights

**Email:** [support@which.co.uk](mailto:support@which.co.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights>

**Telephone:** 020 7770 7000

**Address:** 3 Capital Quarter , CF10 4BZ

## Relay UK

**Website:** <https://www.relayuk.bt.com/>

**Telephone:** 0800 7311 888

**Address:** Relay UK Team, PR1 1BA

## Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

**Website:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

**Telephone:** 0800 7311 888

## **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**

**Telephone:** 0800 7311 888

## **The Housing Ombudsman Service**

**Website:** <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

**Telephone:** 0300 111 3000

**Address:** Housing Ombudsman Service, L33 7WQ

## **Patient Safety Commissioner**

**Email:** [pscenquiries@patientsafetycommissioner.org.uk](mailto:pscenquiries@patientsafetycommissioner.org.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.patientsafetycommissioner.org.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0300 111 3000

**Address:** Patient Safety Commissioner, SW1P 3HZ

## **Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council**

**Email:** [ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/AdultSocialCare>

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

**Address:** Adult Social CarePoint Newcastle City Council, NE4 9LU

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## **Related Articles**

[How to make a complaint about Adult Social Care services](#)

[Having your say about health and care services](#)

[Your Consumer Rights](#)

[Where to get legal advice](#)

[Fraud and scams](#)

[How to challenge a benefit decision](#)

[Advocacy support to get your voice heard](#)