

Guidance for filing a complaint

If you want to complain about the health service, you can contact various authorities etc.

This booklet is about guidance for filing a complaint.

A review of the Patients' Board of Complaints' procedures can be found in the booklet "How a complaint is dealt with at the Patients' Board of Complaints".

Want to complain about the Danish health service?

Guidance for filing a complaint

If you want to complain about the Danish health service you can contact the local patient office or the complaints authority directly. All districts have established patient offices to simplify access to the complaints and compensation system. The patient offices have patient counselors who give advice and guidance about the formulation of complaints etc. In addition, the patient offices will be able to give advice on patient rights in more detail.

Want to complain about professional healthcare?

Complaints about professional healthcare are dealt with by The Patients' Board of Complaints:

The Patients' Board of Complaints
Frederiksborggade 15
1360 Copenhagen
Tel: 33 38 95 00
Fax: 33 38 95 99

The Patients' Board of Complaints can decide if there are grounds for criticising the professional treatment exercised by healthcare professionals. By professional healthcare it is understood as the work performed by different health professionals. This can for example be

- examination
- treatment
- care
- information and consent
- preparation of statements
- breach of confidentiality
- appeals against decisions on access to medical information

In determining whether there are grounds for criticism, the Board assesses whether individual health professionals have acted within the norm of generally accepted professional standards. The Board thus will not consider whether the patient has received the best possible treatment. The Patients' Board of Complaints is an autonomous and independent regulatory authority. The Board is, with its decisions, independent of the authorities responsible for healthcare operations, and independent of professional interests. When the board makes its decision, two laymen who represent the health service users and the hospital owners respectively participate, as well as two professionally trained health officials. The board's chairperson is a judge.

Who can complain to the Patients' Board of Complaints?

The person who has been treated can complain, but they can also, by proxy, be represented by another person or association or by a solicitor. For children the parents responsible can complain. However, children over the age of 15 years old usually complain themselves. If the complaint is dead, the next of kin, for example, the deceased's spouse, parents or children usually complain on behalf of the deceased.

How do you make a complaint?

Complaints about professional healthcare are sent to the Patients' Board of Complaints. You can also send the complaint to the medical officers in your region or to the local patient office. Here you can also get help to formulate the complaint. On the Board's website, www.pkn.dk, you can fill in and print out a complaint form which you can hereafter send to the Board (website in Danish only). This may make it easier for you to draw up a complaint. You may also ring

to the patients' Board of Complaints or the medical officers in your region and ask for a complaint form. You are welcome to contact the Patients' Board of Complaints first either in writing or by telephone.

Is there a deadline for appealing to the Patients' Board of Complaints?

The complaint must be submitted within 2 years after the time when you first suspected, or should have suspected that you have received the wrong treatment, but no later than five years after the day the treatment occurred. In rare cases, the Patients' Board of Complaints waive the two-year limitation period if exceptional circumstances warrant it.

Want to complain about the level of service?

Complaints about the level of service, like, for example, waiting time, a health professional's conduct, refusal of a free choice of hospital, accommodation or food and cleaning are processed by your regional authority. If you have a complaint, you may send your complaint to the local patient office. You can also contact the regional authority who will tell you where to send your complaint.

Want to complain about a private practice dentist?

Complaints about private dental practitioners are sent to the regional authority. It is the local dental board which makes decisions.

Want to complain about a psychologist outside of the health service?

Complaints about psychologists outside of the health service are dealt with by:

The Psychologists' Board
Holmens Kanal 22
1060 Copenhagen
Tel. 33 92 45 23

Are you seeking compensation?

Notification of compensation is dealt with by:

The Patient Insurance Association
Nytorv 5
1450 Copenhagen
Tel. 33 12 43 43
E-Mail: pf@patientforsikring.dk

The Patient Insurance Association deals with claims for damages which you have incurred in connection with examinations and treatment in hospital with authorised health professionals, and within the local health service systems, etc. It is not a condition for obtaining compensation that you have also complained to the Patients' Board of Complaints.

Want to complain about coercion in psychiatry?

Complaints against coercion in psychiatry are dealt by the local psychiatric patients' board, which has been established by each state administration. If you wish to appeal against a decision taken by a local psychiatric patients' board you may address your complaint to the local patients' board which will ensure that the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate authority.

Want to complain about an administrative decision?

The Patients' Board of Complaints deals with complaints against certain administrative decisions taken by municipalities, regional authorities and the Maritime Authority:

- The issuing of health cards
- Classification in security groups 1 and 2 and transfer to group 1 insurance
- Notification of choice of doctor
- Unpaid care by a physiotherapist after medical referral
- Bereavement grant
- Transportation and travel expenses for treatment and examinations
- Payment of cash grants under the Danish Health Act § 228
- Grants for treatment in the practice sector
- Conditions for entitlement to hospital treatment, including treatment aids
- Nutritional preparations
- Grants to healthcare in another EU / EEA country
- Mileage allowance for doctors
- Danish Maritime Authority's decisions under the Danish Health Act § 161

You must submit the complaint to the authority which issued the decision (the municipality, the regional authority or the Danish Maritime Authority). The deadline for appeals is four weeks from the day when you have received the decision. If the authority can not completely or partially uphold the ruling, it will send the complaint to the Patients' Board of Complaints which then takes a stance on the authority's decision.

If you want to appeal against administrative decisions other than those listed above, you must seek guidance on filing a complaint with the authority which issued the decision.

The Patients' Board of Complaints
Frederiksborggade 15, 2nd Floor
1360 Copenhagen
Tlf: (Monday - Friday 10-14) 33 38 95 00
Fax: 33 38 95 99
E-mail: pkn@pkn.dk