KINDOX

FREE FAMILY CARE RESOURCE · ENGLAND

Care Home Complaint Letter Template

A clear, factual letter to raise a complaint with a care home — plus a follow-up letter and a one-page checklist for before you write.

What's inside

- **Before you write** — complaint, safeguarding concern or emergency? Who to send it to, and what to gather.
- **Complaint letter** — two pages, laid out so you can fill it in and send it.
- **Follow-up letter** — for when the care home hasn't responded.
- **After you send it** — escalating to the council or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Print the pages you need and fill them in by hand.

General information for families in England. Not legal, medical or safeguarding advice. Sources checked October 2026.

Before you write

A complaint, a safeguarding concern and an emergency follow different routes. Check which one applies first.

Someone is in immediate danger — call 999. Don't wait to write a complaint.

You suspect abuse or neglect — raise a safeguarding concern with the adult social care team at the council for the area where the care home is (Care Act 2014, section 42).

You're unhappy with the care or the service — make a complaint to the care home. That's what this template is for. A complaint and a safeguarding concern can run at the same time.

Who to send it to

Start with the care home — usually the registered manager, or whoever its complaints procedure names. Ask for a copy of the procedure. If the council arranges or pays for the care, you can complain to the council instead or as well. If the NHS funds the care (for example, NHS Continuing Healthcare), concerns about NHS decisions such as funding go to the NHS body responsible.

What to gather first

- [ ] Dates and times of what happened, as precisely as you can
- [ ] Who was involved, and their roles
- [ ] What you saw yourself, kept separate from what you were told (and who told you)
- [ ] Anything already raised with staff — who, when, and what they said or agreed
- [ ] Copies of photos, messages, emails or notes you may want to mention
- [ ] What you'd like the care home to do about it

Your complaint log

Date complaint sent

Sent to (name and role)

How sent (email, post, by hand)

Date acknowledged

Response promised by

Date response received

Your name

Date

Your address

To: registered manager (or named complaints contact)

Care home name

Your email and phone

Care home address

Subject: Formal complaint about the care of (resident's full name)

Dear ...

I am writing to make a formal complaint about the care my relative or friend named above is receiving at your care home.

Your relationship to them, and whether they've asked you to act for them or you hold a lasting power of attorney (health and welfare)

What happened

In date order. Give times and names where you have them, and keep what you saw yourself separate from what you were told (and by whom).

What I have already done

Who you've spoken to and when, and what they said or agreed to do.

What I would like to happen

For example: a full explanation; a review of the care plan; a meeting with the manager; a specific change; an apology.

Please could you:

1. confirm in writing that you have received this complaint and are handling it under your complaints procedure, and send me a copy of that procedure;
2. tell me who will look into it, and when I can expect a full written response;
3. let me know if you need anything further from me.

I have kept a dated record of events and can provide copies of relevant notes, photographs or messages if they would help.

If we are unable to resolve this through your complaints procedure, I understand I can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to look at it.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Name

Enclosed (list any copies you're sending, or leave blank)

Follow-up letter

Use this if you've had no acknowledgement, or the date you were given for a response has passed. Give a specific date for a reply.

Your name and address

Date

To (name, care home, address)

Subject: Follow-up to my complaint of (date) about the care of (resident's full name)

Dear ...

I wrote to you on (date) to make a formal complaint about the care of the person named above.

Acknowledgement (tick one):

- [ ] You acknowledged my complaint on the date below.

- [ ] I have not received an acknowledgement.

I have not yet received a full written response. Please could you tell me in writing, by the date below, where my complaint has got to and when I will receive your response.

Reply needed by (date)

If I have not heard from you by then, I will consider:

- [ ] raising the complaint with the council that arranges or pays for their care (name below)

- [ ] asking the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to look at it.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Name

After you send it

Keep a copy of everything you send and receive, and note every call or promise — who, when, and what was agreed.

If the care home doesn't respond, or you're unhappy with the answer

- **Chase in writing** using the follow-up letter, with a specific date for a reply.
- **Council-arranged care:** you can also complain to the council. Councils must acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days and send a full response within six months unless you agree a longer period (Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009). These don't govern a care home's own procedure for self-funded or council-arranged care, which should set out its own timescales.
- **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO):** free and independent, and covers care homes whether the council or the family pays. Complain to the provider first and allow it a reasonable chance to reply, but don't wait indefinitely. The LGSCO's current guidance (lgo.org.uk) explains how long it expects you to allow before you escalate. It normally expects a complaint in writing within 12 months of first knowing about the problem, though it can look at a later complaint.
- **NHS-funded care:** unresolved complaints about the NHS can go to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The two Ombudsmen can investigate together where health and social care overlap. Disagreeing with an NHS Continuing Healthcare eligibility decision is a separate review process: ask the ICB for a local review, then apply to NHS England for an Independent Review Panel if needed.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** regulates care homes but can't take forward individual complaints. You can still tell it about poor care.

Useful addresses: lgo.org.uk · cqc.org.uk · ombudsman.org.uk · your council's adult social care team. A fuller guide is at kindox.app/guides/how-to-complain-about-a-care-home

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Important information

This template helps you organise and put your concerns in writing. It is general information for England only, and is not legal, medical or safeguarding advice. It does not decide whether care was appropriate, and using it doesn't guarantee any outcome or create any relationship between you and KinDox. Check the care home's own complaints procedure, and the LGSCO, CQC or NHS websites, for what applies to your situation. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.