

LIFE MATTERS

**sia** spinal  
injuries  
association  
for life after spinal cord injury

# CARE AGENCY RESOLUTION

FACTSHEET



[spinal.co.uk](http://spinal.co.uk)

# A short guide to dealing with problems with care agencies

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Effective care is a vital part of your independence. If you have a problem with your care, it is important to deal with it right away. This is a short guide to how to approach any problems you may have care provided by a care agency.

## Minor problems

If the problem is a small one, it is usually best to talk directly to the person concerned if this is possible. Good communication may be all that is needed. Explain why it is a problem for you, find out if the person is having difficulties of their own which are contributing to the problem, and try to agree what needs to change, and how quickly the change needs to take place.

If this does not work, you will need to talk to someone more senior.

## Serious problems

If the problem is more serious, you will need to go directly to the manager, (or possibly to senior management or directors if it cannot be resolved with the manager). Again, good communication may be all that is needed for the problem to be sorted out.

You may also wish to make a formal complaint. The law requires all health and social care service providers to have a complaints procedure, which you can ask to see, explaining how they respond to complaints and giving you a timescale.

## Using a complaints procedure

Some people are uncomfortable with making a formal complaint, but it is a formal procedure provided by law and designed to help services deal with problems and learn from them. Some organisations have a “complaints, comments and compliments” policy to show that it is meant to be a positive process to improve services.



When you use the complaints process, be as clear as you can about what has gone wrong and how you think it should be put right.

## The ombudsman

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, or the way the complaint has been dealt with, you can appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) for services arranged by the council, arranged by yourself using a Direct Payment from the council, or paid for privately by yourself; or for services provided by the NHS you can appeal to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

The ombudsman only investigates a few of the cases reported, but has legal powers to examine witnesses, to see documents, and to make recommendations, which may include compensation, in a report which must be published.

## Local authority and NHS

If the agency is provided by the local authority or the NHS, they may be able to help, especially if the care plan is not being delivered.

## The Care Quality Commission (CQC)

At any point in the process, you can also inform the Care Quality Commission, the body which regulates and inspects care providers, about your concerns.

## Some contact details

Local government ombudsman ([www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)):

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

0300 061 0614

or text 'call back', with your name and mobile number, to 0762 480 3014



Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman ([www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk) )

Care Quality Commission ([www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk))

St Nicholas Building

St Nicholas Street

Newcastle

NE1 1NB

03000616161

The Independent Healthcare Advisory Services (IHAS - [www.independenthealthcare.org.uk](http://www.independenthealthcare.org.uk)) has a code of practice for its members on patients' complaints, and it can look into your complaint if you are unhappy with the response you have received from a service.

The UK Homecare Association (UKHCA - <http://www.ukhca.co.uk>) also has a code of practice for its members:

Sutton Business Centre

Restmor Way

Wallington

Surrey

SM6 7AH

Tel: 020 8661 8188

Email: [enquiries@ukhca.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ukhca.co.uk)



**For more information, contact us at:**

Spinal Injuries Association, SIA House,  
2 Trueman Place, Milton Keynes, MK19 6HY

0800 980 0501 (freephone support line open Mon-Fri 10.00am-4.30pm)

sia@spinal.co.uk



## About SIA

Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) is the leading national charity for anyone affected by spinal cord injury. We have specialist support available, for free, to support you through the mental and physical challenges you may face, both now and for the rest of your life.

Our support network is coordinated by a team of people, across the UK, who can put you in touch with our network of experts and trusted partners, covering all aspects of mind, body and life, to help you move forward with life. Our partners specialise in services such as legal, care, housing, finance, mental health and much more.

We are the voice of spinal cord injured people, through our expertise and we can connect you to the services and organisations you need through our network for all.

You can join the SIA community by signing up for free online at [www.spinal.co.uk](http://www.spinal.co.uk).

## Disclaimer

This factsheet has been prepared by SIA and contains general advice that we hope will be useful. Nothing in this factsheet should be construed as giving specific advice, and it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action. SIA does not accept any liability arising from its use. We aim to ensure the information is as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that certain areas are subject to change from time to time. Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, companies, products, services or publications in this factsheet does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement.

Last reviewed May 2023