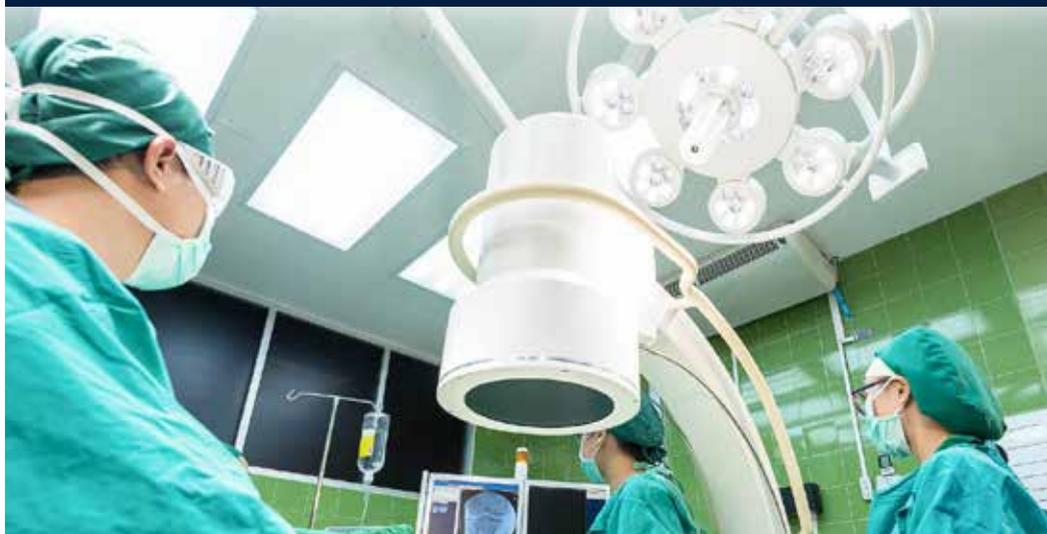




# The Ombudsman and the Public Hospitals



## The Ombudsman is

- Impartial
- Independent
- A free service



Oifig an Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman



Oifig an Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman

## Who is the Ombudsman and what does the Ombudsman do?

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Peter Tyndall is the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman can examine complaints about the actions of a range of public bodies, including public hospitals. All hospitals providing public health services come within the Ombudsman's remit.

The Ombudsman can examine complaints about how hospital staff carry out their everyday administrative activities when providing public health services.

These include complaints about delays or failing to take action. However, there are certain complaints that the Ombudsman cannot examine. These include complaints about:

- private health care regardless of where it is provided and
- clinical judgment by the HSE (diagnoses or decisions about treatment)



## Is the Ombudsman independent?

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Yes. The Ombudsman is independent and impartial when examining complaints.

# What can I complain to the Ombudsman about?

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You can complain about your experience in dealing with a hospital. This might include, among other issues, a hospital:

- applying an incorrect charge
- failing to follow approved administrative procedures, protocols or reasonable rules
- failing to communicate clearly
- failing to seek your informed consent to a procedure
- keeping poor records
- failing to respect your privacy and dignity
- having staff who are rude or unhelpful or who discriminate against you being reluctant to correct an error
- failing to deal with your complaint in accordance with the complaints process.



## Which hospitals are covered??

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You can make a complaint about any public or voluntary hospital providing general, maternity and mental health services, some of which are mentioned below:

### *Dublin Midlands Hospital Group*

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- St James' Hospital Dublin
- St Lukes Radiation Oncology Network
- The Adelaide & Meath Hospital (Tallaght Hospital) Dublin
- Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore
- Naas General Hospital
- Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise
- The Coombe Women & Infant University Hospital Dublin

### *RCSI Hospitals Group*

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- Beaumont Hospital Dublin
- Connolly Hospital Dublin
- Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda
- Louth County Hospital Dundalk
- Cavan General Hospital
- Monaghan Hospital
- Rotunda Hospital Dublin

## ***Ireland East Hospital Group***

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- The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital Dublin
- St Vincent's University Hospital Dublin
- Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar
- St Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny
- Wexford General Hospital
- Our Lady's Hospital, Navan
- St Columcille's Hospital Loughlinstown Dublin
- St Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire
- Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital Dublin
- Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital Dublin
- National Maternity Hospital Dublin

## ***Saolta Hospital Group***

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- University Hospital Galway and Merlin Park University Hospital
- Sligo Regional Hospital
- Letterkenny University Hospital
- Mayo General Hospital
- Portiuncula Hospital
- Roscommon County Hospital

## ***South/South West Hospital Group***

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- Cork University Hospital/Cork University Maternity Hospital;
- University Hospital Waterford
- University Hospital Kerry
- Mercy University Hospital
- South Tipperary General Hospital
- South Infirmity Victoria University Hospital
- Bantry General Hospital
- Mallow General Hospital
- Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital Kilcreene

## ***University Limerick Hospitals Group***

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- University Hospital Limerick
- University Maternity Hospital Limerick,
- Ennis Hospital,
- Nenagh Hospital,
- Croom Hospital

## ***The Children's Hospital Group***

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- Temple Street Children's University Hospital
- Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin
- National Children's Hospital Tallaght

## How will the Ombudsman deal with my complaint?

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Once we establish that we can examine your complaint, we will ask the public hospital to send us a report. If necessary, the Ombudsman may also examine the files and records and may question people involved with the complaint. It can take time to gather the information that we need.

We will examine all issues of maladministration. 'Maladministration' can include an action that was or might have been:

- taken without proper authority
- taken on irrelevant grounds
- the result of negligence or carelessness
- based on incorrect or incomplete information
- improperly discriminatory
- based on an undesirable administrative practice
- otherwise contrary to fair or sound administration or
- the result of the hospital failing to give reasonable assistance and guidance, or failing to provide information on a person's right of appeal or review.

If we find that you have suffered adverse affect due to maladministration, and if the hospital has not taken steps to remedy this, we may recommend it does so. In our recommendation, we may ask the hospital to:

- review what it has done
- change its procedures and practices
- change its decision and/or

- offer an appropriate remedy, including an acknowledgement of what happened, an explanation, an apology and in certain instances financial redress.

## When should I complain to the Ombudsman?

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Before you complain to the Ombudsman you should try to resolve any issues with the hospital using the hospital's own complaints procedure.

Each hospital has a Complaints Officer, appointed under the Health Act 2004. The Complaints Officer will examine your complaint and give you a written response within a stated period. The Complaints Officer will also advise you of your right to seek an internal review of your complaint by a HSE Review Officer or to make a complaint directly to the Ombudsman.

Please remember to include any letters or other correspondence between you and the hospital.

You should complain to the Ombudsman within 12 months of the:

- action complained of or
- the date of the Complaints Officer or HSE Review Officer's report

## How long will it take the Ombudsman to deal with my complaint?

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The time taken to reach a decision will vary from case to case, depending on how complex it is. However, we will keep you informed of what is happening with your complaint.

## What will it cost me to complain to the Ombudsman?

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Nothing - there is no charge for the services of the Ombudsman.

## How do I complain to the Ombudsman?

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You can write or call to:

**The Office of the Ombudsman,**

18 Lower Leeson Street

Dublin 2

Phone: LoCall 1890 22 30 30 or 01 – 639 5600

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.ie](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.ie)

Online: [www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie)

## Can someone else complain on my behalf to the Ombudsman?

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Yes, but only if you give them permission to do so. If you want to complain on behalf of someone else, you must get their permission first.

## Accessible Services

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If you have a disability and need help to use the services of the Ombudsman, contact us to arrange to speak to our Access Officer.