

# Getting your voice heard – England

## Your Member of Parliament (MP)

Why not write, email, tweet or even meet your local MP? Your MP represents you in the Houses of Parliament and speaks on your behalf – it's your right to tell them what matters to you, and their job to listen. You can tell them about your experience of waiting for treatment, highlight Beat's campaigns, and ask them to make a difference in parliament. [Find your MP and get in touch.](#)

Beat have a helpful guide for writing to your MP. You can download this from the website, or get a copy by emailing the team at [campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).

## Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Clinical Commissioning Groups are groups of GPs that are responsible for planning and designing local health services in England. They control around two-thirds of the NHS budget and commission around 60% of the services in your area. They have a legal duty to support quality improvement, which means they need to listen to local people and meet their needs. [Find your local CCG and get in touch.](#)

Beat have a helpful guide for writing to your CCG. You can download this from the website, or get a copy by emailing the team [campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).

## Patient Engagement Groups (PEGs)

Patient Engagement Groups (PEGs) give people who are passionate about health and would like to help improve services in their area the opportunity to have a say in decisions relating to these services. Patient groups are important for that involvement, as they offer people a forum to provide feedback on services, as well as to provide opinions on the planning, designing and delivery of local health services. Anyone can join a patient group, but taking part does require enthusiasm, input and time commitment.

## Healthwatch [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

Healthwatch England is the national champion for those who use health and care services. Healthwatch England is the national body, and there is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. They are independent organisations who listen to your views and share them with those with the power to make local services better. They have significant powers to ensure your voice is strengthened and heard.

If you would like to share your experience of a health and care service, or if you have a question on health and social care related matters, you can get in touch with your local Healthwatch. You can find your local Healthwatch by searching [here](#).

Healthwatch cannot support you to make complaints, but they offer useful tools with [information and advice about making complaints](#).

## Advocacy

Advocacy services help you to get support from another person, called an Advocate. An Advocate can help you express your views and wishes, and make sure your voice is heard. Advocacy is about supporting, enabling, and empowering you to express your views and concerns and access information and services where needed.

What specific advocacy services will be able to help with might vary slightly, but if you are eligible for their service you can expect them to:

- provide an independent and confidential service.
- support you in relation to your rights and options.
- enable you to have your say in your treatment and care.
- provide information to help you understand what options might be available.
- not decide or advise which options to take.
- not judge your wishes or look to seek to persuade you into a particular course of action.

## **POhWER** [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net)

POhWER are a charity that provide information, advocacy and advice services via local branches across England, offering direct and local support. Their independent, free services reach individuals struggling with particular challenges in their lives.

You can call them on 0300 456 2370 or make a referral via the homepage of their website.

POhWER can support you to make complaints to NHS services.

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

The Care Quality Commission are the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. They make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care, and they encourage care services to improve.

They monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet important standards of quality and safety, and publish their findings, including performance ratings, to help people choose care. To do this, they rely on people sharing their experiences of care. You can do this [here](#).

The Care Quality Commission can't make complaints for you or take them up on your behalf because they don't have powers to investigate or resolve them. There is more information about how to complain [here](#).

## **Organise a local awareness event**

Help to focus the spotlight on eating disorders in your local area by holding an event at your local health centre, or in a community space. Beat can provide resources and advice about planning your event. The Beat Tips campaign provides a great focus for raising awareness and helping people to understand the issue. You can find out more about the [Tips campaign](#) and request resources by emailing [campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).