

## NHS Complaints System - Habitual Complaints Procedures

The majority of people probably don't realise that most NHS Trusts and PCT's have a procedure for dealing with people who keep writing to them about the same complaint. Each NHS Trust has its own Habitual Complaints Procedure but they all have very similar criteria which include things such as:

- Persistent pursuing of complaints when the NHS procedure has been properly implemented and exhausted.
- Failure to clearly identify the issues to be investigated despite reasonable efforts of Trust staff.
- Unwillingness to accept documented evidence of treatment given as being factual.
- Continually changing the substance of a complaint, raising new issues; or seeking to prolong contact by raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response whilst the complaint is being addressed. (Care must be taken not to discard new issues)
- Focusing on a trivial matter to an extent that is out of proportion to its significance and continuing to focus on this point.
- Having an excessive number of contacts with the Trust in the course of addressing a registered complaint, so placing unreasonable demands on staff.
- Displaying unreasonable demands or patient/complainant expectations and failing to accept that these may be unreasonable.

When a Trust deems a patient to be a habitual complainant, they will send warning letters first and if the patient continues to complain, they will then refuse to engage in any further contact with the complainant.

*Although Thyroid UK urges you to complain about bad treatment, you do need to be aware of this procedure!*