

## Health Service Ombudsman

One of you should take the role of the **patient**. You slipped and fell a few months ago and were taken to the A&E department of your local hospital. Although you complained of a pain in your ankle the doctor who looked at you said that it was not swollen enough to be broken and was probably a sprain. A few days later it had not improved so you went to your GP. He sent you to have an X-ray which showed that you did have a hairline fracture. You wrote to the hospital to complain that they should have found this the first time you went in, and you are not satisfied with their response.

Another of you should play the part of the **hospital representative**. You apologised to the patient when they wrote to complain and do not see what more you can do to help matters. The doctor who missed the fracture tells you that the department was unusually busy that day and X-rays would have taken hours to complete, leading to unnecessary waiting time for the patient. As it was, although the fracture was missed, no harm was done and the patient would not have been treated differently if it had been found. You have not asked doctors in the A&E department to send all such cases for X-rays as a matter of routine because it is not always necessary and puts pressure on the X-ray department.

The third person can take the role of the **Health Service Ombudsman**. What information do you need before you can investigate this complaint? What might influence your decision? What papers would you ask to see and who might you interview once you had decided to investigate? Talk to the hospital representative and the patient and decide the best way to sort out this complaint.