

Take action!

A Guide to Health complaints and feedback in the ACT

Are you unhappy with the health care you have received from a health service or health professional in Canberra?

Then this guide is for you.

You have a right to make a complaint or give feedback. This can:

- Help fix the problem
- Stop it happening again
- Make health care better for everyone

When you make a complaint or give feedback:

- Your concerns must be addressed in a transparent, timely way
- It must not negatively affect the way you are treated
- You have a right to share your experience to improve the quality of health care

You have these rights wherever you get health care. They are part of the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights: <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/consumers/working-your-healthcare-provider/australian-charter-healthcare-rights>

Every health service must have a complaints and feedback process

Every health service in the ACT – whether it is public, private or run by a community organisation – must have a complaints and feedback process and must make information about it easy to find and understand.

What does this guide cover?

This guide is about how you can make a complaint or give feedback about a health service, or a health professional.

Health services include public hospitals, private hospitals, community health centres, medical practices, pharmacies, dental clinics and allied health services such as physiotherapy and speech pathology practices.

Health professionals include doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists, pharmacists, paramedics, and allied health professionals for example dietitians, speech pathologists and occupational therapists.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

About this Guide

This Guide is made up of 6 Tip Sheets and a Directory.

Start with **Tip Sheet 1. Take action! Health complaints and feedback in Canberra**. It tells you about your options, whatever has gone wrong in your health care.

The other Tip Sheets have extra information about:

- How to make a complaint about a health professional
- Health complaints and feedback for carers, family and friends
- Tips for making a complaint
- What to expect in response to a complaint
- How to request access or a change to your medical record

The **Directory** lists contact details for:

- Organisations that can help you with a complaint or a problem in health care
- The complaints and feedback processes of most hospitals and larger health services in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

The Directory has information about organisations that can help with complaints or feedback about:

- Private health insurance
- Medicare
- Health care provided in another state or territory
- Health care provided under the NDIS
- Health care in residential aged care facilities
- Medicines and poisons
- Food safety
- Mental health orders
- Guardianship
- Problems involving ACT Police

The Directory also has information about what to do if you, or someone you care about, is getting sicker while they are in hospital

Health complaints and feedback matter

Health care in Canberra is usually very safe and high quality. But things can go wrong, even in the best health services.

Your complaint, feedback or compliments can help improve health care for everyone. Good health services and health professionals want your feedback and complaints. It helps them fix problems and offer better care.

If something goes wrong, you can take action.

Unsure whether you want to make a complaint?

You might think	It's good to know
Maybe what happened to me is OK	<p>If it didn't feel OK to you, it isn't OK.</p> <p>You have a right to health care that is safe, <i>and that makes you feel safe.</i></p>
My English is not good enough for me to tell people about what happened to me and why it was not OK.	<p>If you need an interpreter phone 131 450 for the free Translating and Interpreting Service. They can help with translation or interpreting when you are making a complaint.</p> <p>Tell the person you are going to talk that you need an interpreter and ask if they can organise one for you.</p>
I don't know if my complaint will make a difference	<p>Complaints and feedback give services information they need to improve the care they offer.</p> <p>Complaints and feedback can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help fix the problem• Stop the same thing happening again• Make health care better for everyone
Staff might treat me differently	<p>Staff must not treat you badly after you make a complaint. This breaches the standards that all health services must meet.</p> <p>If you think making a complaint has meant that an individual or a service has treated you badly or given you worse care, contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner for advice and help.</p>

<p>I might need to use the service again in the future.</p>	<p>Good health services and health professionals want your feedback and complaints. It helps them fix problems and give better care. Good feedback helps them know what is working well and what patients and their carers want.</p> <p>Giving feedback means better care for everyone in the future.</p>
<p>The problem is too big to fix.</p>	<p>You have a right to share your experience to improve health care. Other patients may have already identified the problem and your feedback adds to the information about a problem and shows that it affects lots of people and wasn't a one-off issue.</p> <p>If you feel the problem is too big for you to fix on your own, you can get involved with a consumer or carer group that advocates for a better health care system for everyone. They may be able to help you work to make specific changes to improve the system.</p>
<p>I can't do it on my own.</p>	<p>You don't have to.</p> <p>Ask someone you trust to support you. You can also give someone else permission to make a complaint for you.</p> <p>Explore whether an individual health advocate can help you.</p> <p>Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner for free advice.</p>

The ACT Health Services Commissioner

The ACT Health Services Commissioner can give you free advice, help you to make a complaint, and investigate complaints about:

- Any health care service
- Anyone who works in any of those places
- Anyone else who provides a service for your health or wellbeing
- Your health record

They can also give you advice and help you with complaints about community services, disability services and aged care.

The Commissioner is part of the ACT Human Rights Commission.

Phone: 6205 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Email HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Online: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/>

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Other resources

You may also be interested in a resource from People with Disabilities ACT: *When Things Go Wrong in Health Care for People with Disabilities*. You can find it at: pwdact.org.au/2019/07/when-things-go-wrong-in-health-services-for-people-with-disabilities/

We have also developed a *Guide to Mental Health Complaints in the ACT*. You can find it on the HCCA website: www.hcca.org.au

Acknowledgements

This guide was developed with advice from health care consumers and carers, and representatives of health services and other agencies. HCCA thanks:

HCCA members

Christine Bowman

Don McFeat

Fiona Tito-Wheatland

Jo Bothroyd

Joanne Baumgartner

Pam Graudenz

Consumer, carer and health advocacy organisations

Advocacy for Inclusion

Carers ACT

Canberra Mental Health Forum

Mental Health Consumer Network

Mental Health Carers Voices

People with Disabilities ACT

Staff at the office of the ACT Health Services Commissioner

Community Health Literacy Steering Group

Anais le Gall (Capital Health Network)

Bailey de Paiva (Canberra Health Services)

Belinda Yates (Calvary Public Hospital Bruce)

Bob Stirling (HCCA Member)

Carol Archard (Carers ACT)

Holly Catt (Canberra Health Services)

Karin Calford (HCCA member)

Louise Botha (Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and Canberra Health Services)

Purity Goj (ACT Health Directorate and ACT Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing)

Rowan Ford (ACT Health Directorate)

Shelley McInnis (HCCA Member).

About the Health Care Consumers' Association

The **Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA)** is the peak consumer advocacy organisation in the Canberra region. HCCA provides a voice for consumers on local health issues and provides opportunities for health care consumers to participate in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making.



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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1 Take action! Health complaints and feedback in the ACT

Sometimes things go wrong in health care. This can happen even in the best health services. You don't have to put up with a problem. You can take action.

You have a right to give feedback or make a complaint. This can:

- Help fix the problem
- Stop it happening again
- Make health care better for everyone.

When you make a complaint or give feedback:

- Your concerns must be addressed in a transparent, timely way
- Your treatment must not be negatively affected

You have a right to share your experience to improve the quality of health care.

You have these rights wherever you get health care. They are part of the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights.

If you need an interpreter phone 131 450 for the free Translating and Interpreting Service.

Get support.

- 1 Talk to someone you trust.** They can help you think about your options, decide what you want to do, and support you when you take action. You can also give someone you trust permission to make a complaint or give feedback for you.
- 2 Speak to a health advocate.** An advocate can help you think about options or make a complaint. Some community services offer this for free to people who need support. Contact the services at the end of this Tip Sheet to find out if they can help you.
- 3 Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner.** You can get free advice, help to make a complaint and support through the process.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

TAKE ACTION!

Choose The Option That Feels Right to You.

- 1 Talk to the health professionals treating you.** Sometimes a conversation can fix a problem before it gets worse. Expect them to listen, answer your questions, and suggest solutions.
- 2 Talk to a person in charge.** Ask to speak to the person in charge. This might be a senior doctor, a nurse in charge, a manager, or a team leader.
- 3 Use the complaints and feedback process.** Every health service in Canberra – whether it's private or run by a community organisation - must have a feedback and complaints process and make information about it easy to find.
- 4 Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner.** The office of the Commissioner can give you free advice and help you make a complaint. They can investigate, support you through the process and arrange conciliation - this is where everyone involved works together to try and resolve the problem.
Phone: 02 6205 2222 - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Take action as soon as you are ready. Some problems need urgent action. If the problem isn't urgent, you can make a complaint at the time or when you feel better. Within two years is best, this makes it easier for services to investigate what happened and to act.

Quick tips

- 1 Take a few minutes to think about what you want.** You might want an explanation, an apology, a refund, or to make sure the same thing doesn't happen again. It's OK if you don't know. If you do know, make sure you tell the person you speak to what you want.
- 2 Be as clear as you can.** What happened, when, where and who was involved? Is it a problem with your treatment, medication, how people talked to you, their attitude, your privacy, or something else?
- 3 Make a list.** Making a list of the things you want to talk about can help you say everything you want to. Make sure you start with the most important things first.
- 4 Focus on what matters most to you.** The people you make the complaint to are more likely to focus on it too. This will help keep the conversation on track to resolve the issue.
- 5 Stay calm.** This makes it easier for people to understand what went wrong and what they can do to respond to the problem. Take someone you trust with you. They can help you remember what you want to say.
- 6 Keep a record.** Who did you speak to, when, and what did they say they would do? Having a record can help you remember what happened if you talk with other people about the problem later. You can ask someone you trust to take notes so you can focus on speaking.
- 7 Don't give up.** You can ask for an update, or an estimate of how long it will take. Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner if you aren't happy with the response.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

Advocacy for Inclusion can provide short-term individual advocacy to people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Carers ACT provides services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT.

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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2. Take action! How to make a complaint about a health professional in the ACT

You have the right to make a complaint about a health professional. This can:

- help fix a problem in your health care
- stop it from happening again
- improve health care for everyone.

When you make complaint, or give feedback:

- You have a right to a transparent, timely response
- Your treatment must not be negatively affected.

You have these rights wherever you get health care. They are part of the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights.

If you need an interpreter phone 131 450 for the free Translating and Interpreting Service.

TAKE ACTION!

Choose The Option That Feels Right to You.

- 1 Talk to the health professional.** Sometimes a conversation can solve a problem before it gets worse. Expect the person to listen, answer your questions, and suggest solutions.
- 2 Talk to a person in charge.** Ask to speak to the person in charge. This might be a senior doctor or nurse, a manager or team leader.
- 3 Use the complaints and feedback process.** Every health service in Canberra – whether it's public, private or run by a community organisation - must have a feedback and complaints process and make information about it easy to find.
- 4 Contact The ACT Health Services Commissioner.** They can give you free advice and help you make a complaint. They can investigate, support you through the process and arrange conciliation – this is where everyone involved works together to try to resolve the problem.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

The Commissioner can help with a complaint about:

- any health professional in the ACT
- any health service in the ACT
- anyone who offers a service for your health or wellbeing in the ACT.

The Commissioner's office can help you work towards an explanation, an apology, a refund or other financial outcome, or a change in how the health professional or the service they work for operates.

If your complaint is about a **registered health professional**, the Commissioner will share information with Ahpra. Ahpra may also take action.

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Contact the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra). They investigate complaints about registered health professionals.

Ahpra cover: Doctors, Nurses and Midwives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Dentists, Radiation Practitioners and Radiographers, Physiotherapists, Chiropractors, Occupational Therapists, Optometrists, Osteopaths, Paramedics, Pharmacists, Psychologists, Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Podiatrists.

Ahpra is the only agency that can stop these health professionals from working, or limit what they can do. This is the **only** outcome Ahpra can achieve. They can take this action if there is evidence the person is providing unsafe care, harming or putting patients at risk, or their judgement is impaired.

Ahpra can also act if an unqualified person is pretending to be a registered health professional.

Ahpra may refer you to the Health Services Commissioner. To find out more about Ahpra's role and how Ahpra handles complaints, visit www.ahpra.gov.au

What about health workers that do not have to register with Ahpra?

Some allied health professionals do not have to register with Ahpra. They may register with a professional association instead. Some examples are speech pathologists, dietitians, exercise physiologists, and most complementary or alternative therapists.

Any health care workers that do not need to register with Ahpra or another body still need to follow the [Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers](#). A health care worker is anyone who provides a service in the ACT to someone for any of these purposes:

- a. assessing, recording, maintaining or improving the physical, mental or emotional health, comfort or wellbeing of the service user;
- b. diagnosing or treating an illness, disability, disorder or condition of the service user.

Some examples are massage therapists, Chinese medicine practitioners, nutritionists, doulas, disability care workers, aged care workers and counsellors.

Under the Code of Conduct:

All health care workers must	All health care workers must not
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide safe and ethical health care• Get your consent for treatment• Keep good records and protect your privacy• Minimise harm and take action if something goes wrong• Have the right insurance• Co-operate with your other health practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mislead you about their work or qualifications• Put you at risk because of their own health problems• Practice when using drugs or alcohol• Make false claims about curing serious illnesses like cancer• Take advantage of you financially• Tell you not to see other health practitioners

You can make a complaint to the person, their manager, the service they work for or to the ACT Health Services Commissioner. You can also contact their professional association to make a complaint. Some professional associations have a list of their members on their websites, or you can call the association to check whether the person is a member. There is more information about professional associations in the Directory.

Take action as soon as you are ready. Some problems need urgent action. If the problem isn't urgent, you can make a complaint at the time or when you feel better. Within two years is best, this makes it easier for services to investigate what happened and to act.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Ahpra

Phone: 1300 419 495

Online: www.ahpra.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service: individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

Advocacy for Inclusion: short-term individual advocacy for people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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3 Take Action! Information about health complaints for carers, family and friends.

Sometimes things go wrong in health care. This can happen even in the best health services. Carers, family and friends don't have to put up with a problem. You can take action.

You have a right to give feedback and to make a complaint. This can:

- Help fix the problem
- Stop the same thing from happening to someone else, and
- Improve health care for everyone.

You can support the person you care for to take action. They have the right to choose how involved they want you to be in decisions about their care.

You can also make a complaint or give feedback about their care if they are too unwell or have given you permission. The service will ask for proof that they have been given permission to share private information with you about the person's care or the complaint.

You can also give feedback or make a complaint about how **you** were treated as a carer, friend or family member.

If you need an interpreter call the free Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

Know your rights.

When you make a complaint or give feedback:

- your concerns must be addressed in a transparent, timely way
- the care that the person you support receives must not be negatively affected.

You have a right to share your experience to improve the quality of health care.

You have these rights wherever you get health care. They are part of the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights.

TAKE ACTION!

Choose The Option That Feels Right to You.

- 1 Talk to the health professionals.** Sometimes a conversation can solve a problem before it gets worse. Expect them to listen, answer questions, and suggest solutions.
- 2 Talk to a person in charge.** Ask to speak to the person in charge. This might be a senior doctor or nurse, a manager, or a team leader.
- 3 Use the complaints and feedback process.** Every health service in Canberra – whether it's public, private or run by a community organisation - must have a feedback and complaints process and make information about it easy to find.
- 4 Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner.** The Commissioner's office can give you free advice and help you make a complaint. They can investigate, support you through the process and arrange conciliation - this is where everyone involved works together to try and resolve the problem.
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Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Good to know

How soon should I take action?

You, or the person you care for, can make a complaint or give feedback at the time, or later. If the problem is not urgent, you can wait until the person you care for feels better. Within two years is best, this makes it easier for services to investigate and act.

Can I make a complaint for the person I care for?

Yes. Anyone can raise a concern, or make a complaint, about a problem in a health service. But staff may not be able to share information about the problem and what they do about it unless the person you support has given permission for you to make a complaint for them. The service may ask for evidence that you have permission. For example, they may ask the person you support to sign a form.

If the person you support for can't give their permission, staff may be able to share information with you if you have a close relationship. For example, you might be their next of kin, legal guardian, primary carer, or hold Enduring Power of Attorney.

You can also make a complaint or report a problem to the ACT Health Services Commissioner. The Commissioner has the power to investigate a problem raised by any member of the public.

Quick tips

You and the person you care for can:

- 1 **Take a few minutes to think about what you want.** This may be an explanation, an apology, a refund, or to make sure the same thing doesn't happen to someone else. It's OK if you don't know.
- 2 **Be as clear as you can.** What happened, when, where and who was involved? Is it a problem with treatment, medication, how people talked to you, their attitude, your privacy, or something else?
- 3 **Make a list.** Making a list of the things you want to talk about can help you say everything you want to. Make sure you start with the most important things first.
- 4 **Focus on what matters most to you.** The people you make the complaint to are more likely to focus on it too. This will help keep the conversation on track to resolve the issue.
- 5 **Stay calm.** This makes it easier for people to understand what went wrong and what they can do to respond to the problem. Take someone you trust with you. They can help you remember what you want to say.
- 6 **Keep a record.** Who did you speak to, when, and what did they say they would do? Having a record can help you remember what happened if you talk with other people about the problem later. Make sure you record their name and contact details.
- 7 **Don't give up.** You can ask the service for an update, or an estimate of how long it will take. Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner if you are unhappy with the response.
- 8 **Get support.** You can:
 - Find out whether an individual health advocate can help you. Contact the advocacy services at the end of this Tip Sheet to find out more.
 - Connect with Carers' ACT for information and services for carers in the ACT.
 - Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner for free advice and assistance.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222 or

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Phone: 02 6242 5060 or

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

Ahpra

Phone: 1300 419 495

Advocacy for Inclusion can provide short-term individual advocacy to people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Phone: 02 6257 4005 or

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Carers ACT provides services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT.

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Email: carers@carersact.org.au.



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Take action! Tips for making a health complaint

Making a complaint or giving feedback about how a health care service could do things better can be hard, but it helps to make health care better and safer for everyone.

If you need an interpreter call the free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450. TIS can help you when you are talking to people about a complaint or giving feedback about your health care.

Take a few minutes to think about what you want

Sometimes people want:

- An explanation of what happened
- An apology
- Someone to hear their side of the story
- A change in how the health service does things – so that the problem doesn't happen again
- A financial outcome, for example a refund.

You may want more than one thing.

It's OK if you don't know. Problems in health care can be complicated. You don't have to have all the answers.

The ACT Health Services Commissioner can give you free advice and talk about your options.

Be as clear as you can about what happened

This can make it easier to write or talk about what happened. It can help the service understand what needs to be fixed.

Take a moment to think about:

- What happened?
- When?
- Where?
- Who was involved?
- Why are you unhappy?

Talking about the problem

If you make a verbal complaint, or are talking with people from the health service about what happened:

- Focus on what's most important to you - other people are more likely to focus on it too. This can help keep the conversation on track to resolve the issue.
- Stay as calm as you can
- Say what you want to happen
- Be direct, polite and avoid personal attacks
- Make sure you get the name of the person you speak to and their contact details.

You can:

- Write down what you want to talk about before you go, to help you remember. Work out what are the most important things you want to say and check your list before the discussion finishes.
- Ask someone you trust to go with you – they can give you support and help remember what was said or take notes.
- Ask the person you talk to what will happen next and when it will happen.

Making a written complaint

If you're writing a letter or an email:

- Try to be direct, clear and polite.
- Focus on what's most important to you – other people are more likely to focus on it too.

If you know, include:

- Dates, times and names of people involved.
- A timeline of events - this helps the service to understand what happened.
- Anything you have done to solve the problem – for example, any staff you spoke to and what they did or agreed to do.
- Copies of relevant documents – don't send the originals, as you might need them.

Keep a record

Keeping a record can help if you need to talk with other people about the problem later.

If you speak to people about the problem, you can write down:

- Who you spoke to, and their job title
- The date and time you spoke
- Their telephone or email contact in case you need to follow up
- What they said they would do, and when by.

You can also keep a record of:

- Letters or emails you send
- Letters, emails, invoices or other information the health service gives you.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222 or

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Phone: 02 6242 5060 or

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

Carers ACT provides services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT.

Phone: 02 6296 9900 or

Email: carers@carersact.org.au.



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Notes

5 Take action! What to expect in response to a complaint

Wherever you make a health complaint:

- 1 The service will decide how to handle your complaint
- 2 Your complaint, or the issues you have raised, will be shared with the person, or people, you made the complaint about
- 3 They will have an opportunity to share their view about what happened
- 4 The service will inform you of the outcome **if you ask them to**. They may not tell you about the outcome of your complaint unless you ask them to.

You can expect:

- To be treated with courtesy and respect by everyone involved
- That you will get the same, or better, care after you make a complaint
- A response to your complaint if you ask for one
- For your concern to be taken seriously
- A response in a reasonable time frame
- A response that is honest and transparent

You have the right to a response to your complaint within a reasonable time frame. But complaints handling processes, and how long they take, are different for each service.

You can ask:

- What is the process?
- What will happen next?
- How long it will take for you to respond?
- Who will consider my complaint?
- You can ask for an update

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Good to know

Many services will only give you a response to your complaint if you ask for one. If you want a response, say so.

Public health services

If you received care in a public health service in the ACT, you can expect:

- The service will acknowledge your complaint within five days by post, phone or email, depending on how you lodged your complaint.
- If the service needs more information from you, they will ask for it then.
- A response within 35 days – or clear advice from the service if it is going to take longer

Unhappy with how your complaint has been handled?

If you are unhappy with how your complaint has been handled, you can contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner. The Commissioner can help with a complaint about:

- any health worker in the ACT
- any registered health professional in the ACT
- any health service in the ACT
- anyone who offers a service for your health or wellbeing in the ACT.

The Commissioner's office can help you work towards an explanation, an apology, a refund or other financial outcome, or a change in how the health professional or the service operates.

What else can they do?

If the Commission thinks that a health worker has breached the Code of Conduct and is putting the public at risk they can:

- tell the health care worker to change how they practice
- order the health care worker to stop providing health services
- set conditions on how the health worker can practice
- make a public statement to warn people about the health worker or their services.

You can find out more about the ACT Health Services Commissioner at: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/health/>

Phone: 02 6205 2222 - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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6 Take Action! Your medical records.

Request access to your medical records

If you want more information about what happened during the event you are making the complaint about, it can help to see or get a copy of your medical records.

How can I access my medical records?

You can ask to access your medical records at any time. Only you or another person you've given permission to can make the request. This could be your legal guardian or someone with Enduring Power of Attorney.

If the record is held by a public health service in the ACT, you can access it by submitting a *Patient request to access Health Records* form. You can contact the service or find the form on the ACT Health website: www.health.act.gov.au.

If a record is created by a private health service or practitioner, such as a GP or a private dental clinic, you will need to contact the service to ask for access to your medical record. If you don't know how to contact the service, you may be able to find it listed on the [Health Direct](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services) website at: www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services.

The service may ask you to put your request in writing. You can include:

- your details – name, address, phone number and Medicare number
- the information you want
- how you would like to get the information (for example by email or in the mail).

Sometimes a health service can refuse to give you access to your medical records. They must tell you why, and how you can complain about their decision.

Who needs to keep records?

Not all health care workers have to keep records in the same way as registered health professionals. Under the [Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers](#), they must keep records if the services they have provided are likely to be relevant to your ongoing health care.

If they do keep records, they must keep your medical record private, and you should be able to access it when you ask.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

How much will it cost?

Canberra Health Services (including the Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital, and North Canberra Hospital) may charge you a fee to access your record. The maximum fees at January 2024 are:

Access to Records	Viewing only, no copies	\$17.75
Copies of Records	Hard copy - up to 50 pages	\$48.75 (no GST applies)
	Additional pages	40c each
Discounts	Pensioners	50% off standard fee

If the record you want to access is held by a private practice, they could also charge a fee.

This fee covers the cost of preparing the information you asked for. The service may charge you an extra fee to cover the cost of posting you a paper copy of your record.

You can ask for an estimate of the cost. The service may be able to help you to reduce the cost – for example, by getting an electronic copy by email instead of a printed copy by post.

Canberra Health Services review their fees each year. You can find more information on the ACT Health website at www.health.act.gov.au.

How long will it take to get my records?

The health service must respond to your request within two weeks of receiving it. This could be to ask for payment of the fee to provide the record, to give you a copy of your record, or to explain why they are not going to give you access.

If the service charges a fee to provide a copy of your record, they must provide the copy within a week of receiving your payment (or within 30 days after receiving your request to access your record, whichever is sooner).

The time that health services have to respond to your request to access your medical records are set by the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997.

My Health Record

Your health information may also be held in your *My Health Record*. This is the national personal electronic health record system.

To see what information is in your My Health Record you will need to register and log in to your account. You can do that by visiting the My Health Record website: www.myhealthrecord.gov.au.

You can choose to give a family member, friend or carer access to your record. You can do that at the My Health Record website: www.myhealthrecord.gov.au.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Understanding your medical records

Medical records can be difficult to understand. It could help to go through them with a doctor you trust. This might be your General Practitioner or another doctor of your choice.

Request a change to your medical record

If you think the information a health service has recorded about you is incorrect, you can contact them and ask them to update them. They may ask you to put your request in writing. The health service may agree to add a note to your health record, for example to record that the information is not correct, or to record that you disagree with the information.

If you think the health service has shared incorrect information with others, you can ask the service to tell anyone they have shared it with about the change to your record.

Sometimes a health service may decide the information in your record is correct, even if you disagree. You can ask the health service to include a statement that you believe the information is inaccurate.

Correcting information in *My Health Record*

If you have found an error in your *My Health Record*, you can call My Health Record on 1800 723 471 to ask to have it corrected.

My Health Record allows you to remove or hide certain information yourself. Instructions are available on their website: www.myhealthrecord.gov.au.

If there is information missing from your My Health Record you are able to upload your own additional information and chose who can access it. You can find out how at the My Health Record website.

Need more information?

The office of the ACT Health Services Commissioner can assist with problems or complaints about health records. Phone 02 6205 2222 or email HRCIntake@act.gov.au

The Office of the Information Commissioner has more information about accessing your health records at: www.oaic.gov.au.

The Office of the Information Commissioner is an Australian government agency that promotes and upholds your rights to privacy and freedom of information.



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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Jan 2024

Take action!

Contact Directory

– Complaints and Feedback

This directory lists details for:

- 1 Agencies that can help you make a health complaint in the ACT
- 2 Agencies that can help with specific problems or complaints:
 - Someone is getting sicker while they are in hospital.
 - Health care provided in another state or territory.
 - Health care provided by the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)
 - Health care in residential aged care facilities
 - Health and Allied Health professionals
 - Medicare
 - Private health insurance
 - Medicines and poisons
 - Food safety
- 3 Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly
- 4 Ways to make complaints and give feedback for most hospitals and public health services in the ACT

7.1 Agencies that can help you make a health complaint

The ACT Health Services Commissioner

The ACT Health Services Commissioner offers free advice and can help you make a complaint. They can investigate your complaint and support you through the process. The Commissioner can also arrange conciliation – this is where everyone involved works together to decide how to solve the problem. Conciliation can be done by meetings, emails or letters. Staff from the Commissioner's office are independent and impartial in conciliation.

The Commissioner can assist with complaints about:

- Any health care service, residential aged care service, disability service or community service
- Public, private and non-government health services
- Anyone who works for a health, aged care, disability or community service
- Anyone else who provides a service for your health or wellbeing
- Discrimination in a health, aged care, disability or community service
- Your health record
- Situations where several agencies are involved

If your complaint is about a registered health professional, the Health Services Commissioner will share information with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra). Ahpra is the only agency that can place limits on what a registered health professional can do or stop them from working.

The ACT Health Services Commissioner is part of the ACT Human Rights Commission.

Phone: 02 6205 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

More information: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/health/>

Online complaint form: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/>

Public Advocate of the ACT

The Public Advocate can help if you are interacting with a government or community-run service or system, are concerned about someone else who is, or are unsure whether a service or system is doing the right thing. The Public Advocate can help you raise a concern about mental health, disability, community, care and protection or youth justice services. The Public Advocate monitors whether in-patient mental health services promote the rights of people receiving care. An advocate visits mental health in-patient facilities regularly and can meet with you there. The Public Advocate is part of the ACT Human Rights Commission.

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: PublicAdvocateReferrals@act.gov.au

More information: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/advocacy/>

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

ACT Official Visitor Scheme

Official Visitors make sure government institutions and community facilities respect the rights, dignity and quality of life of people in their care. An Official Visitor can visit you in a mental health facility, hear your concerns, help you make a complaint and work with the service to fix the problem. Official visitors visit mental health facilities, correctional facilities, specialist disability housing, residential aged care services, residential services for children and young people, respite facilities and supported accommodation. The Official Visitor scheme is managed by the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian.

Phone: 1800 150 036 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm);

TTY: 1800 424 183 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm);

Website: <https://ovs.act.gov.au/>

Email: ovs@act.gov.au.

Staff at the facility may be able to help if you want to contact an Official Visitor outside of business hours.

The Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

ADACAS is non-government community service that offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

Website: www.adacas.org.au

Advocacy for Inclusion

can provide short-term individual advocacy to people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Website: www.advocacyforinclusion.org

Carers ACT

provides services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT.

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au

Website: www.carersact.org.au

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

7.2 Agencies that can help in specific situations

You or someone you care about is getting sicker in hospital

If you, or someone you care about, is getting sicker despite receiving care in hospital, you can:

- Talk to the health professionals involved about the problem. If you think it is urgent, say so.
- Ask to speak with someone in charge. If you think it is urgent, say so.
- If the person is a patient at Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital, North Canberra Hospital and Calvary Private Hospital, you can use the Call and Respond Early (CARE) for Patient Safety program.

To get help from the CARE program:

- Talk to your nurse, midwife or doctor about your concerns
- If you are still concerned, your nurse, midwife or doctor will talk to the person in charge of the shift
- If you are still concerned, phone the CARE for Patient Safety program:

Canberra Hospital and University of Canberra Hospital phone 02 5124 3337

North Canberra Hospital phone 02 6201 6717.

You received health care in another state or territory

If the problem happened in another state or territory, you can:

- Contact the health professional involved to provide feedback or make a complaint
- Use the feedback and complaints process of the health service
- Make a complaint by contacting the health complaints authority for that state.

New South Wales

Health Care Complaints Commission

Find out more: www.hccc.nsw.gov.au

Victoria

Health Complaints Commissioner.

Find out more: www.hcc.vic.gov.au

Mental Health Complaints Commissioner

Find out more: www.mhcc.vic.gov.au

Other States and Territories

Find organisations that can help you: <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications-resources/links-to-other-organisations>

Health care provided by the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)

To make a complaint about health care, including mental health care, provided as part of an NDIS plan you can:

- Contact the health professional involved to provide feedback or make a complaint
- Use the feedback and complaints process of the health service
- Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner for advice, and to make a complaint
- Make a complaint to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is an independent statutory agency of the Australian Government that exists to improve the quality and safety of care provided under the NDIS.

Phone: 1800 035 544

TTY: 133 677

National Relay Service: call 1300 555 727 and ask for 1800 035 544

Website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints

The NDIS is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). To make a complaint about the service you have received from the NDIS or NDIA you can contact the NDIS directly.

Phone: 1800 800 110

Email: feedback@ndis.gov.au

Online form: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints/contact-and-feedback-form>

Mail: National Disability Insurance Agency, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601 or deliver it to an NDIS office.

If you disagree with a decision the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has made about your NDIS plan, you can request the NDIA review it.

There is more information online here: www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/how-apply/receiving-your-access-decision/internal-review-decision

Advocacy for Inclusion can help you with this. Visit: www.advocacyforinclusion.org/our-services/ndis-appeals/ or call Advocacy for Inclusion on 02 6257 4005.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Health care in residential aged care

To make a complaint about health care, including mental health care, in a residential aged care facility you can:

- Contact the health professional involved to provide feedback or make a complaint
- Use the feedback and complaints process of the service
- Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner for advice, and to make a complaint
- Contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is the Australian Government agency that regulates aged care services and resolves complaints about these services.

Phone: 1800 951 822

TTY: 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 951 822

Speak and Listen phone: 1800 555 727 and ask for 1800 951 822

Website: www.agedcarequality.gov.au

Online complaints form: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint/lodge-complaint/online-complaints-form>

Post: Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, GPO Box 9819 in your capital city

Medicare

For complaints about Medicare, contact Medicare first. You can make a complaint online via their website.

Phone: 1800 132 468

Website: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au.

If you are not satisfied with how Medicare handle your complaint, you can contact the **Commonwealth Ombudsman**. You can make a complaint online via their website.

Phone: 1300 362 072 (10:30am to 3:00pm Monday to Friday)

TTY: 133 677 then ask for 1300 362 072

Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 362 072

National Relay Service: ask for 1300 362 072

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

Private health insurance

The **Commonwealth Ombudsman** provides an independent service to help consumers who have problems with private health insurance.

Complaints can be about a private health fund, a broker, a hospital, or a medical or other practitioner that (as long as the complaint relates to private health insurance or Medicare).

You can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman via their website (www.ombudsman.gov.au) or by phoning 1300 362 072.

Medicines and poisons

If your complaint or feedback is about the **storage, prescription or supply of a medicine or a poison** you can contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner or the ACT Health Protection Service.

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

More information: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/health/>

Online complaint form: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/>

ACT Health Protection Service

Phone: 02 5124 9208

Email: hps@act.gov.au

Website: www.health.act.gov.au/businesses/food-safety-regulation

Food safety

To make a complaint about **food safety** (for example in a café or restaurant), contact the ACT Health Protection Service.

Phone: 02 5124 9700

Email: hps@act.gov.au

Website: www.health.act.gov.au/businesses/food-safety-regulation

Mental health orders

If you are receiving care under a mental health order and you want to change the order or have it removed, you can request a review at the **ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal**. You can do this yourself if you are confident. There is more information at www.acat.act.gov.au/case-types/mental-health-cases#Review-of-mental-health-orders.

ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Phone: 02 6207 1740

Email: tribunal@act.gov.au

Website: www.acat.act.gov.au

Legal Aid can give you free advice and represent you in the tribunal if you have a mental health order. If you have been detained in hospital, a legal aid lawyer can advise and assist you there.

Legal Aid ACT

Phone: 1300 654 314 (8:30am – 5pm weekdays)

Email: legalaid@legalaidACT.org.au

Website: www.legalaidact.org.au

Guardianship matters

You can request a review of a Guardianship arrangement at the ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Legal Aid can help you apply to the Tribunal for a review of a guardianship order.

Legal Aid has more information about the kinds of health and medical procedures that a Tribunal-appointed Guardian can consent to on their website: legalaidact.org.au/sites/default/files/files/publications/Guardianship_3.pdf

Legal Aid ACT

Phone: 1300 654 314 (8:30am – 5pm weekdays)

Email: legalaid@legalaidACT.org.au

Website: www.legalaidact.org.au

Complaints about the Public Trustee and Guardian

You can make a complaint about how you have been treated by the Public Trustee and Guardian directly to the Public Trustee and Guardian.

Public Trustee and Guardian

Phone: 02 6207 9800

Email: ptg@act.gov.au

Website: www.publictrustee.act.gov.au

If you are not satisfied with the Public Trustee and Guardian's response, you can make a complaint to the ACT Ombudsman. **The Ombudsman cannot help you with requests to remove or change a guardianship order.** You can make a complaint to the Ombudsman via their website.

ACT Ombudsman

Phone: 02 6276 3773

Dedicated line for Indigenous clients: 1800 060 789

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.act.gov.au

Complaints about Police in the ACT

ACT Policing is part of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). You can make a complaint about ACT Police directly to the AFP – ACT Policing at your local police station or to AFP Professional Standards. You can also make a complaint online. You can make a complaint for someone else, and anonymously.

AFP - ACT Policing Professional Standards

Phone: 02 5127 2020

Website: www.afp.gov.au

Online: www.afp.gov.au/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints#contact

If you are unhappy with how ACT Policing has handled your complaint, you can complain to the ACT Ombudsman. The ACT Health Services Commissioner can give you free advice if your complaint about ACT Policing is related to health care, including mental health care.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

ACT Ombudsman

Phone: 02 6276 3773

Dedicated line for Indigenous clients: 1800 060 789

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.act.gov.au

Health professionals

You can make a complaint about a health professional to the person, their manager, the service, or to the ACT Health Services Commissioner. If the person is a registered health professional, you can also consider making a complaint to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra). There is more information about Ahpra's role in *Tip Sheet: Make a Complaint about a Health Professional in the ACT*.

Ahpra

Phone: 1300 419 495

Website: www.ahpra.gov.au

Some allied health professionals do not have to register with Ahpra. They are regulated by a professional association instead. Some examples are social workers, speech pathologists, dietitians, exercise physiologists, and most complementary or alternative therapists.

You can contact their professional association to make a complaint. You may need to check which association to direct your complaint to, by asking the association or checking if they have a list of members on their website. Each professional association will have a complaints process which you can find out about on their websites:

- **Counsellors** may be members of the Australian Counselling Association (www.theaca.net.au), or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (www.pacfa.org.au)
- **Psychotherapists** may be members of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (www.pacfa.org.au)
- **Social workers** are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers (www.aasw.asn.au)
- **Exercise physiologists** and **exercise scientists** register with Exercise and Sports Science Australia (www.essa.org.au)
- **Speech pathologists** register with Speech Pathology Australia (www.speechpathology.net.au)
- **Dietitians** register with Dietitians Australia (dietitiansaustralia.org.au)

7.3 Raise an issue with a member of the ACT Legislative Assembly

Any ACT resident can raise a concern with a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

Your local MLA

You can raise a concern about something that has happened in a health service. Your MLA will probably refer your issue to the health service involved for a response.

Find contact details for your local MLAs at: www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/find-your-members

ACT Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health

You can raise a concern with the ACT Minister for Health or Minister for Mental Health. Your complaint will probably be shared with the health service for a response from them.

Find contact details at: www.contactmyminister.act.gov.au/

Use an online form: www.contactmyminister.act.gov.au/

Post:

ACT Minister for Health

GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

ACT Minister for Mental Health

GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

7.4 Health services – complaints and feedback processes

Canberra Health Services

Canberra Health Services (CHS) includes:

- The Canberra Hospital,
- The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children,
- University of Canberra Hospital,
- North Canberra Hospital
- Walk in Centres,
- Community Health Services,
- Public Dental Program.

Make a complaint or give feedback

Online: www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/feedback

Email: healthfeedback@act.gov.au or,

CHSNCH.feedback.act.gov.au for North Canberra Hospital

Mail: Canberra Health Services, Consumer and Carer Feedback, Reply Paid 825,
Canberra ACT 2601

Feedback forms are available at reception and in each ward or service. You can return these at the box at the main entry.

National Capital Private Hospital

Make a complaint or give feedback:

Online: www.nationalcapitalprivatehospital.com.au/contact-us

Mail: General Manager, National Capital Private Hospital, Corner Gilmore Crescent and Hospital Road, GARRAN ACT 2605

Calvary Private Hospital Bruce, Calvary John James Hospital

Make a complaint or give feedback:

Online: www.calvarycare.org.au/contact/feedback/

Email: feedback@calvary-act.com.au

Mail: Manager Clinical Governance and Quality, Calvary Hospital, Reply Paid 254, Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

Feedback forms are at reception, public areas and each ward/service. You can return these at the box at the main entry.

If you are unhappy with how a health service has responded to your complaint, you can contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner to make a complaint or talk about a problem.

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

More information: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/health/>

Online complaint form: <https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/>

7.5 Mental health services – complaints and feedback processes

You can find out how to make a complaint about a mental health service in the ACT in the Mental Health Complaints Guide for the ACT on the HCCA website at www.hcca.org.au.

Paper feedback and complaint forms are available at all services. They are usually at reception, in public areas and each ward. You can put them in the collection box at the service. You don't need to use one of their forms to give feedback or make a complaint.

Calvary Health Services

Calvary Care operates:

- Calvary Private Hospital (including Hyson Green)
- Calvary John James Private Hospital

Complaints and feedback on any Calvary service can be sent to:

Email: feedback@calvary-act.com.au.

Online: www.calvarycare.org.au/contact/feedback/

Mail: Manager, Clinical Governance and Quality, Calvary Hospital, Reply Paid 254 Jamison Centre ACT 2614.

Canberra Health Services

Canberra Health Services (CHS) operated services include:

- The Canberra Hospital
 - Adult Mental Health Unit
 - Adult Mental Health Short Stay Unit
 - Adult Mental Health Day Service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
 - Perinatal mental health liaison service
 - Eating disorders program
 - Early intervention team
 - The Cottage Adolescent Day Program
 - Community teams
- Justice Health Services
 - Forensic Mental Health Service
 - Primary Mental Health Service in the Alexander Maconochie Centre
 - Bimberi Youth Detention Centre
 - The Periodic Detention Centre
- North Canberra Hospital including Acacia Ward and the Older Persons Mental Health Unit
- Community Health Centres
- Community Mental Health Services
- Dhulwa Mental Health Unit

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

Complaints and feedback on any CHS service can be made by:

Phone: 02 5124 5932 (8.30 to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: HealthFeedback@act.gov.au

Mail: Consumer Engagement and Feedback Team, GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601

Online form: www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/feedback

Adult Step-up, Step-down service and Youth Step-up, Stepdown Services

The Step-Up, Step-Down services are operated by WellWays and Canberra Health Services. Woden Community Service provides community support.

WellWays

Phone: 1300 111 400

Online form: www.wellways.org/contact-us

Canberra Health Services

Phone: 02 5124 5932 (8.30 to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: HealthFeedback@act.gov.au

Mail: Consumer Engagement and Feedback Team, GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601

Online form: www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/feedback

Woden Community Service

Phone: 02 6282 2644

Email: info@wcs.org.au

STEPS facility

Catholic Care operates this facility with Canberra Health Services.

Catholic Care

Phone: 02 6162 6100

Email: info@catholiccare.org.au

Mail: PO Box 3167, Manuka ACT 2603

Canberra Health Services.

Phone: 02 5124 5932 (8.30 to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: HealthFeedback@act.gov.au

Mail: Consumer Engagement and Feedback Team, GPO Box 825 Canberra ACT 2601

Online form: www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/feedback

National Capital Private Hospital

The National Capital Private Hospital is run by Healthscope.

You can make a complaint either verbally or in writing if you have an issue about your care or the service provided. You can raise any concerns the nurse in charge.

Written complaints should be responded to within seven working days. If you are unhappy with their response to your complaint, you can contact the Healthscope Corporate Office on 03 9926 7500.

Phone: 02 6222 6666

Online: www.nationalcapitalprivatehospital.com.au/contact-us

Post: General Manager, National Capital Private Hospital, Corner Gilmore Crescent and Hospital Road, Garran ACT 2605

7.6 Private medical practices

Each private practice or private practitioner will have different processes. However, they must have a formal complaints process and make information about it easy to find and understand.

You can ask for a feedback form, look on their websites for information about complaints and feedback, or ask to give feedback at reception.

For complaints about an individual health professional who is a sole provider (they work alone, not as part of a larger practice), you can contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner.

You can also contact the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra). They investigate complaints about:

- Doctors
- Nurses and Midwives
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers
- Dentists
- Radiation Practitioners and Radiographers
- Physiotherapists
- Chiropractors
- Occupational Therapists
- Optometrists
- Osteopaths
- Paramedics
- Pharmacists
- Psychologists
- Podiatrists
- Chinese Medicine Practitioners

Ahpra is the only agency that can stop these health professionals from working, or limit what they can do. This is the only outcome Ahpra can achieve. They only take this action if there is evidence the person is providing unsafe care, harming or placing patients at risk, or their judgement is impaired.

Ahpra

Phone: 1300 419 495

Website: www.ahpra.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service: For a free interpreter phone 131 450. You can also phone the service and ask for an interpreter.

Allied health practitioners

Some allied health professionals do not have to register with Ahpra. They register with a professional association instead. Some examples are social workers, speech pathologists, dietitians, exercise physiologists, and most complementary or alternative therapists.

If you need an interpreter, phone the **free** Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450. You can also phone the health service and ask for an interpreter.

You can make a complaint to their professional association or to the ACT Health Services Commissioner. Some professional associations have a list of their members on their websites, or you can call the association to check whether the person is a member.

You may need to check which association to direct your complaint to, by asking the association or checking if they have a list of members on their website. For example:

- **Counsellors** may be members of the Australian Counselling Association (www.theaca.net.au), or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (www.pacfa.org.au)
- **Psychotherapists** may be members of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (www.pacfa.org.au)
- **Social workers** are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers (www.aasw.asn.au)
- **Exercise physiologists** and **exercise scientists** register with Exercise and Sports Science Australia (www.essa.org.au)
- **Speech pathologists** register with Speech Pathology Australia (www.speechpathology.net.au)
- **Dietitians** register with Dietitians Australia (dietitiansaustralia.org.au)



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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Jan 2024