

Take Action! Factsheet 1: Complaints and Feedback in the ACT



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you how to make **health complaints** and give **feedback**.



Giving feedback is when you speak up about your health care.

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Feedback can be about good and bad things that happened.



Health complaints are complaints about your health care.

You can complain about anything that you did not like while you were at hospital. This includes people.



Complaints are when you speak up about something wrong.

Complaints are a type of feedback.



When we say feedback we mean good feedback and complaints.

Your right to give feedback



You have the **right** to give good feedback and to make complaints.



Rights are things every person should have.

Health care rights include:

- having enough food and clean water
- getting fair and equal treatment
- being able to make your own health decisions
- getting the health care you need.



The Australian Charter of Health Care Rights tells us about our health care rights.

They are like rules for health care providers.



Giving feedback can be a good thing.

It can:

- Help fix a problem

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- Stop a problem from happening again
 - Make sure good things happen again
- Make health care better for everyone.



When you give feedback health care providers must do some important things.



They must:

- Get back to you about your feedback
- They must not take too long

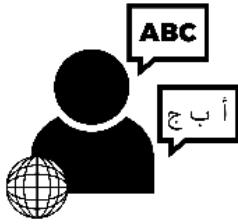


- They must continue to give you good health care even if you made a complaint.



If you need an **interpreter** call 131 450.

This is the Translating and Interpreting Service.



Interpreters speak in other languages.

This includes sign language for people who are deaf.

Interpreters can help people who do not speak or understand English.

Get support



You might need help with giving your feedback.

Here are some people you can ask:



- Someone you trust such as friend or family or a support person.



- Speak to a **health advocate**



- Contact the **ACT Health Services Commissioner**

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Health advocates can speak up on your behalf.

They can help you with your feedback.

There is a list of health advocates in the ACT at the end of this fact sheet.



The ACT Health Services Commissioner can help by giving you:

- Free advice
- Help with your complaint
- Support through the complaint.



Take Action

Choose the option that feels right to you

1

Talk to the health professionals treating you



Expect them to:

- Listen to you
- Answer your questions
- Suggest how to make things better.

2

Talk to the person in charge



- Ask to speak to the person in charge
- This might be a senior doctor, manager or team leader.

3

Use their complaints or feedback process



- Every ACT health service must have a feedback process
- It must be easy to find.

4

Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner

- They can investigate the issue
- They can arrange **conciliation**



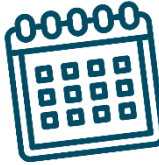
This is when everyone involved gets together.

They all talk through the issue.

They try to solve it together.

Take action when you are ready

1 year



2 years



Giving feedback is best within 2 years.



Some issues are urgent.

You should give your feedback as fast as you can.



With other issues you can wait until you feel ready.

Quick Tips



Think about what you want

You might want the health service to:

- Say sorry
- Explain what happened
- Change the way they do things.

It is OK if you do not know what you want.



Be as clear as you can

Give as many details as you can such as:

- What happened and what the problem was
- When and where it happened
- Who was there



Make a list

Write down the things you want to talk about.

Start with the most important things.



Focus on what matters to you

Try not to talk about other issues.

Stick to the important things in your list.



Stay calm

- People will understand you better
- Take someone you trust to help you stay calm

Keep a record

Take notes of:



- Who you speak with and what they say
- What happened when
- In a meeting you can ask someone you trust to take notes.

Don't give up

You can ask:



- For an update
- How long it will take
- The ACT Health Services Commissioner if you are not happy with what happens.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

ADACAS offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Advocacy for Inclusion

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

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

Carers ACT

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au

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

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