

Take action! How to raise a concern about your mental health in-patient care

You have a right to give feedback or make a complaint about your care in a mental health in-patient unit.

YOUR COMPLAINT OR FEEDBACK MATTERS

You have a right to make a complaint about a mental health professional or service. This can:

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

You don't have to do it on your own. You can ask someone you trust to support you, or give them permission to make a complaint for you.

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

AM I AN IN-PATIENT OF A MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE?

If you stay overnight in hospital, or another service, you are an in-patient. Mental health in-patient services in the ACT include:

- Canberra Hospital - Mental Health Short Stay Unit, Adult Mental Health Unit, Adult Mental Health Day Service and Adolescent Mental Health Unit and Ward 12B
- University of Canberra Hospital - Adult Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit
- Dhulwa Secure Mental Health Unit
- Calvary Public Hospital - Acacia Ward and the Older Persons Mental Health Inpatient Unit
- Calvary Private Hospital – Hyson Green
- Gawanggal Extended Care Unit
- Adult Step Up Step Down service and Youth Step Up Step Down service
- Overnight care for your mental health provided in any other area of a hospital

TAKE ACTION!

CHOOSE THE OPTION THAT FEELS RIGHT TO YOU.

- 1 **Talk to the health professionals treating you.** Sometimes a conversation can solve 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 of your care. This might be a senior doctor or nurse, or a team leader.
- 3 **Use the complaints and feedback process.** Every mental 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. **This is usually best for non-urgent problems.**
- 4 **Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner** for free advice and help to make a complaint. The Commissioner can investigate, support you, and arrange conciliation – this is where everyone involved works together to resolve the problem.
Phone 02 6205 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) Email HRCIntake@act.gov.au
Make a complaint online: hrc.act.gov.au/complaints

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.

ACT Official Visitor Scheme

Official Visitors make sure mental health facilities respect the rights, dignity and quality of life of people in their care. They can visit you in the facility, hear your concerns, help you make a complaint and work with the service to fix the problem. Phone 1800 150 036 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm); TTY 1800 424 183 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm); Online ovs.act.gov.au or email ovs@act.gov.au. Staff may be able to help if you want to contact an Official Visitor outside of business hours.

CAN I WAIT UNTIL I FEEL BETTER?

Yes. You can make a complaint at the time, or when you feel ready. If the problem is not urgent you can wait until you feel better. Within two years is best, this makes it easier for services to investigate and act.

CAN SOMEONE I TRUST MAKE A COMPLAINT FOR ME?

Yes. Anyone can make a complaint or give feedback about a problem in mental health. But staff may not be able to share information about the problem and what they do about it, unless you have given permission to the person who makes the complaint. If you can't give permission, staff may be able to share information with someone who has a close relationship to you. For example, the person may be your guardian, nominated person, legal representative or you may have named them in your Advance Consent Direction or Advance Agreement.

Someone you trust can also make a complaint to the ACT Health Services Commissioner. The Commissioner can investigate a problem raised by any member of the public.

PLAN AHEAD

Yes. You have the right to decide what kind of care you want if you become unwell in the future. Complete an *Advance Agreement* and *Advance Consent Direction* and appoint a nominated person while you are well. You can use the My Rights, My Decision toolkit to do this. Visit: www.actmhcn.org.au or contact the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network on 02 6230 5796.

WHAT IF I'M GETTING SICKER?

If your health is getting worse while you are an in-patient, you or someone you trust should talk to the staff. If that doesn't help, ask to talk to someone in charge. If you're still getting worse, in some hospitals you can call the CARE for Patient Safety Program for a clinical response. At Canberra Hospital call 02 6244 3337, at University of Canberra Hospital call 02 6244 3337, and at Calvary Public Hospital call 02 6201 6717.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

The ACT Health Services Commissioner offers free advice, and can help you make a complaint and investigate. Phone 02 6205 2222 or email HRCIntake@act.gov.au

ACT Official Visitor Scheme: 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. Phone and TTY 1800 150 036 or email ovs@act.gov.au

The Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service: Individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers. Phone 02 6242 5060 or email adacas@adacas.org.au

Advocacy for Inclusion: Short-term individual advocacy support for people who identify as having a mental illness or disability. Phone 02 6257 4005 or email info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Carers ACT: Services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT. Phone 02 6296 9900 or email carers@carersact.org.au.

The Public Advocate of the ACT: An advocate regularly visits ACT hospitals, the ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Alexander Maconochie Centre, and can meet you there to help you raise a concern about your care. Phone 02 6205 2222 or email PublicAdvocateReferrals@act.gov.au



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