

Take action!

Health care complaints and feedback matter

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

YOUR COMPLAINT OR FEEDBACK MATTERS

You might face a problem with your treatment, medication, the cost of tests and treatments, how staff of a service interact with you or talk with you, your privacy or your medical record.

You can take action by making a complaint or giving feedback. This:

- Lets a health service know about a problem
- Gives the service information about what they need to improve
- Can help the people involved understand what matters to consumers and patients

EVERY HEALTH SERVICE MUST HAVE A COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

1

Every health service in the ACT – whether public, private or run by a non-government organisation - must have a process for complaints and feedback.

2

They must also make information about how you can make a complaint or give feedback easy for you to find and understand.

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

You might feel unsure whether you want to make a complaint or give feedback.

It's good to know that you have a right to take action.

- You have a right to make a complaint or give feedback.
- You have a right to a transparent and timely response.
- Your treatment must not be affected.

You have these rights wherever you get health care and for whatever type of health care you get.

They are part of the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights.

In the ACT you also have additional rights as a mental health consumer. These are set out in the ACT Charter of Rights for People Experiencing Mental Ill Health or Mental Disorder. You can find it here: <http://www.actmhc.org.au/>

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

ACT Health Services Commissioner

The ACT Health Services Commissioner is part of the ACT Human Rights Commission and can offer advice, help you make a complaint, investigate and arrange conciliation – this is when 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

Website: <https://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.

UNSURE WHETHER YOU WANT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

YOU MIGHT THINK

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW

Maybe what happened to me is OK

If it didn't feel OK to you, it isn't OK.
You have a right to health care that is safe *and that makes you feel safe*.

I don't know if my complaint will make a difference

Complaints and feedback give services information they need to improve the care they offer.
A complaint or feedback can:

- Help fix the problem
- Stop the same thing happening again
- Make health care better for other people

Staff might treat me differently if I make a complaint.

You have a right to be treated the same, or better, if you give feedback or make a complaint. The health service **must not** treat you worse or discriminate against you if you make a complaint.
The ACT Health Services Commissioner can take action if staff treat you differently because you gave feedback or made a complaint.

I may have to see the same health professional again in the future.

Good health services and health professionals **want** your feedback – good or bad.
Feedback or complaints let them know what they are doing well and what could be done better.

The problem is too big for me to fix

You have a right to share your experience to improve health care.
Consider getting involved with a consumer or carer organisation that advocates for better health care for everyone. They may be able to help you work to make specific changes to improve the system.

Not all of my care was bad.

No problem is too small to raise. Good health services want to fix problems – big or small.
You can give feedback about what was good as well as what could have been better.

I can't do this on my own.

You don't have to.
Someone you trust can support you or make a complaint for you if you give them permission, such as your nominated person, carer, family or friend.
The ACT Health Services Commissioner can give you free advice and help you to make a complaint.
You may be able to get help from a health advocate, such as ADACAS or Advocacy for Inclusion. Some community services offer this for free to people who can't advocate for themselves or who need support.

ADVICE FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE

You can find out more about making a complaint or giving feedback in different settings in the fact sheets that are part of this Take Action series.

1. Is there a problem with your mental health care?
2. How to make a complaint about a mental health professional in the ACT
3. How to raise a concern about In-patient mental health care
4. Mental Health Care Complaints – Information for carers, nominated persons, family and friends
5. Advocacy - How to improve the mental health system in the ACT

To find a copy of the fact sheets, you can go to www.hcca.org.au/takeaction



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January 2022 Review Date: February 2024