

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.

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.

This fact sheet provides general information that is accurate at the time of publication. It is not professional medical or legal advice. This work is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA license



Jan 2024