

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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Jan 2024