

The HCSCC

The HCSCC can take complaints about any aspects of health services, services for people with a disability (or their carers) or services for aged people (or their carers).

If the HCSCC receives a complaint about your service we will assess whether to conciliate, investigate, refer or take no further action on the complaint.

Dealings with parties to a complaint the HCSCC will:

- + Be impartial and independent;
- + Protect confidentiality;
- + Provide advice and assistance to both users and providers;
- + Allow you the opportunity to respond to a complaint or to adverse comments;
- + Provide protection, through the Act, against reprisals, threats or intimidation related to a complaint.

The HCSCC will ultimately determine whether the provider has acted reasonably in providing the service by having regard to the Code of Health & Community Rights and Responsibilities, accepted standards, legislation and any other matter the Commissioner considers relevant.



For more information about the HCSCC, including how to make a complaint and how to respond to a complaint, please contact the HCSCC or visit our website.

GPO Box 4409
Darwin NT 0801

Level 5, NT House
22 Mitchell St, Darwin NT 0800

Phone: 08 8999 1969
Freecall: 1800 004 474
Fax: 08 8999 6067
Email: hcscc@nt.gov.au

TTY: 133 677 or 1800 555 677

**Translating and
Interpreting Service (TIS):** 131 450

www.hcscc.nt.gov.au



Responding to Complaints about your health, disability or aged care service: A guide for Providers

Complaints help improve quality

**DRIVING
improvement**

Do you have a Complaints Policy?

Developing and using a complaints policy and complaint form in your organisation, and training staff to manage complaints appropriately will assist your service to resolve complaints. If you would like assistance in developing complaint procedures, please contact the HCSCC.

The HCSCC will keep providers and users informed of the progress of the complaint throughout our complaint handling process.

The HCSCC acknowledges that receiving a complaint can be a stressful experience for a provider. Take time to consider the complaint in a constructive manner before you deal with the complainant or respond to the complaint.

If the complaint is not able to be resolved directly you can contact the HCSCC or refer the user to us.

Complaints are good

Complaints about your service are an opportunity. They give your service a chance to:

- + help your clients understand their care and treatment;
- + reflect on and improve your service; and
- + protect and enhance your reputation.

Complaints are frequently the result of miscommunication and if handled well, can result in a strengthened relationship between user and provider.

Handling a complaint directly

Every complaint is different, however these following general principles may assist you to resolve complaints:

Respond Promptly - the quicker you acknowledge and begin the process of responding to a complaint, the more likely it is to resolve.

Gather all relevant information - ensure you are fully informed about the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

Keep clear and accurate records - of the complaint, attempts at resolution etc. These should be kept separate from the user's service records.

Emphasise confidentiality and privacy - treat complaints confidentially; minimise the number of staff aware of or dealing with the complaint to protect the privacy of both the user and the service provider.

Keep your promise - set realistic timeframes for responses or action; keep the user informed; aim to resolve within 30 days.

Ask questions - ensure you fully understand the reason for a complaint and the issues that are important to the user. Enquire about the need for interpreters, support people or other special needs.

Plan meetings - where you plan to meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint, try to do so on neutral territory; somewhere everyone involved will feel comfortable. Whether in person or on the phone, make sure you can discuss concerns uninterrupted.

Seek advice - if you are unsure how to proceed with a complaint, or whether it is appropriate to deal with the complaint directly, seek advice from colleagues, employers, your professional association, insurance body or the HCSCC.

