



## Information Sheet:

# The complaint resolution process

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**The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent Statutory Authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints about health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories.**

HaDSCO takes a resolution based approach to managing complaints. We aim to resolve complaints as informally as possible and in the most timely and efficient manner. There are three stages in the complaints management process: enquiry; assessment; and complaint resolution including negotiated settlement, conciliation or investigation.

### Complaint enquiry

Individuals wishing to make a complaint about a health, disability or mental health service should contact HaDSCO to discuss their concerns. Depending on the nature of the complaint and the outcomes sought, HaDSCO will either:

- encourage the concerns to be raised directly with the service provider, which in many cases results in a speedy resolution;
- direct the individual to our online complaint form or forward them a complaint form to complete; or
- refer the complaint on to a more suitable organisation if HaDSCO is unable to deal with it.

### Complaint assessment

Until the complaint form is completed and submitted, HaDSCO cannot take any further action on the issues raised. After a completed complaint form is received, the complaint is assessed to identify whether it can be dealt with by HaDSCO. If so, the most appropriate method for resolution is identified.

Based on the outcome of the assessment, a complaint is accepted, rejected or referred. If the complaint relates to a registered health practitioner, HaDSCO is required by law to notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) of the complaint. HaDSCO and AHPRA then agree on the most appropriate way to manage the complaint.

Complaints that are accepted by HaDSCO will progress to one of three complaint resolution pathways: negotiated settlement; conciliation; or investigation.

### Negotiated settlement and conciliation

The negotiated settlement process involves an exchange of information between the parties which may be conducted over the telephone or in writing and generally does not require a face to face meeting.

Conciliation usually involves all parties agreeing to, and engaging in, face to face meetings to discuss and resolve the issues raised in the complaint.

The aim of these pathways is to assist both parties to reach an agreement. The HaDSCO process facilitates communication between the parties and assists participants to reach an agreed resolution.

### Investigation

Investigations involve a formal process through which HaDSCO determines if any unreasonable conduct has occurred on the part of a service provider.

Some matters are placed into investigation following complaint assessment. In some cases, where a complaint cannot be resolved through negotiated settlement or conciliation, the matter is placed into investigation following a recommendation of staff, which is approved by the Director.

### Complaint outcomes

HaDSCO achieves a range of outcomes for both the person who made the complaint and for improved service delivery in the health, disability and mental health sectors. These include provision of explanations by service providers, apologies, refunds or the waiver of fees, facilitating access to services, staff training, changes to processes and procedures, and introduction of new policies.

Once the process is complete, the parties are informed of the outcome by letter or a report containing details of any outcomes.

### Contact HaDSCO for more information

Complaints and enquiries: (08) 6551 7600

Free call: 1800 813 583 (free from landlines)

Fax: (08) 6551 7630

Email: [mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au)

Web: [www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au)

Interpreter Service: 131 450

[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

National Relay Service: 1800 555 660

[www.relayservice.wa.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.wa.gov.au)

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