

Complaints regarding registered health practitioners

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent statutory authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health or disability services provided in the State of Western Australia.

Acting impartially and in confidence, HaDSCO reviews and reports on the causes of complaints, undertakes investigations, suggests service improvements and advises service providers about effective complaint resolution.

HaDSCO works under a number of legislative regulations and frameworks. In October 2010 a new piece of legislation, the *Health Practitioner National Law*, came into effect. This law impacted the way in which complaints regarding registered health practitioners are handled and processed. HaDSCO, by law, is now required to consult with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) when complaints relate to a registered health professional.

HaDSCO and AHPRA must now notify each other upon receipt of complaints and consult about the future management of the complaint. The document also details how information is shared between organisations.

One of the key changes for registered practitioners, employed by Government agencies, is that HaDSCO may now need to communicate directly with the practitioner rather than their employer, in the first instance.

If HaDSCO receives a complaint that relates to a registered practitioner, HaDSCO will write to advise the individual that a complaint has been received by the Office and explain that AHPRA must be advised. Registered practitioners do not need to take any action upon receiving this letter. However, HaDSCO staff are available to answer questions if they arise.

Once it has been determined which agency is most suitable to manage the complaint, HaDSCO will write to the practitioner again to advise them of the decision.

If HaDSCO continues to manage the complaint it will be managed in the usual way, which is through the employing agency. If AHPRA manage the complaint they will liaise directly with the practitioner.

Many organisations offer support for employees when a complaint is made. Many registered practitioners also have insurers who can offer advice.

Questions or concerns should be directed to HaDSCO on (08) 9323 0600, or AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

HaDSCO: Supporting improvement through complaint resolution

hadsco.wa.gov.au