



Information Sheet:

Helpful tips for making a complaint

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 encourages complaints to be raised with the service provider, in the first instance.

This information sheet provides some helpful tips on how to raise and resolve complaints directly with a service provider, including:

- Things to consider before lodging a complaint
- Tips for making a complaint in writing
- Tips for making a complaint in person
- Tips for making a complaint via the phone

Things to consider before lodging a complaint:

Who needs to see the complaint

Many organisations have dedicated complaint departments. The website of an organisation may be the best place to find this information, or contact the organisation and enquire on this service.

How to submit your complaint

Complaints can be lodged online, in person, in writing or via the telephone. Consider the method and choose an approach that you are most comfortable with. With any approach, ensure that you include relevant information to support your complaint and detail the outcome that you hope to achieve.

External assistance

There are a number of agencies which can assist with discussing the issues or when raising a complaint.

The Health Consumers Council, Mental Health Advocacy Service or People With disabilities Western Australia, as examples, can provide advocacy services and help with writing a complaint.

Making a complaint in writing

If the complaint is complex, providing it in writing may be the best option for the following reasons:

- A written format can present the information clearly and concisely.
- It enables the individual to ensure all important details are provided.
- It encourages the service provider to respond in writing, this response can be kept and referred back to.
- It allows time for planning and reflection.
- It allows the service provider time to review the complaint, consult their documentation on the matters and provide a thorough response.

When making a written complaint, it is important to:

- Have a clear understanding of the issue/s you want to raise.
- Think about the information to include, such as what occurred, dates, names, locations and supporting documents.
- Use language which is clear, factual and objective.
- Set out the outcomes you are seeking.
- Request a response.

A sample letter is provided over the page.

Making a complaint in person

When making a complaint in person, it is important to take some time to prepare and consider the following:

- When the best time to discuss a complaint face to face would be. By taking time out to gather information and consider concerns in depth, the complaint can be made more effectively.
- Making an appointment if possible.
- A list of questions that require a response or circumstances that need clarification. Sending this to the service provider before meeting will give them time to prepare a detailed response.
- Taking time to consider what the desired outcomes from making the complaint are.
- If you wish to bring a support person to the meeting, such as a family member, friend or advocate.
- Taking any supporting documents and a pen and paper to the meeting.
- Make a note of the people involved in the complaint, as an example, who in the organisation has the complaint been lodged with.
- Following up on any unresolved concerns in writing.

Making a complaint over the telephone

When making a complaint over the telephone, consider the following:

- When the best time to discuss a complaint would be. By taking time out to gather information and consider concerns in depth, the complaint can be made more effectively.
- A list of questions that require a response or circumstances that need clarification. Sending this to the provider before making contact by telephone will provide them with time to prepare a detailed response.
- Details of what is hoped to be achieved or the desired outcomes from making a complaint.
- Follow up any unresolved concerns in writing.
- Make a note of the people involved in the complaint, as an example, who in the organisation has the complaint been discussed with.
- Have a pen and paper to hand.
- Request to speak with the relevant person and take note of their name.

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

Complaint letter template

Return address

Recipient name and address

Date

Dear Name of Recipient

SUBJECT LINE

- Details of persons involved, including the details of the service provider
- Details of the consumer if complaining on the behalf of another individual (e.g. name, short history if relevant)
- A summary of what occurred that includes relevant dates and locations
- Copies of any relevant documents
- Details of what is hoped to be achieved or the outcome being sought by making a complaint
- A list of questions that require a response

Yours sincerely/faithfully

Signature

