



How to make a health service complaint

Everyone has the right to make a complaint about a health service or a health service provider in Queensland. All you need to do is contact the Office of the Health Ombudsman, Queensland's independent health service complaints agency.

Should I make a complaint?

If you are not satisfied with a service provided by a health service provider, or any aspect of a health service provided to you, a family member, or someone in your care in Queensland, then it is your right to make a complaint.

Before making a complaint, try talking with your health service provider—this is often the quickest and easiest way to address your concerns or fix a problem. Visit our website for advice on talking with your provider (www.oho.qld.gov.au).

If you're not satisfied with the response, or feel uncomfortable talking with the provider directly, contact us.

Complaints are important

If you're like most people, you probably don't like to complain. You may not know what you can complain about, how to make a complaint, or might not think it will make a difference. It can be even more difficult if you're unwell, upset or busy.

Complaints about health services are very important, as they can identify areas for improvement, stop the same problems happening again and help to make health services better for all Queenslanders.

Rest assured, you will be heard when you lodge a complaint with the Office of the Health Ombudsman. Your complaint will be taken seriously, examined thoroughly and resolved as quickly as possible.

What can I complain about?

You can make a complaint about any health service carried-out in Queensland.

A **health service** is any service that is, or claims to be, for maintaining, improving, restoring or managing health and wellbeing.

A **health service provider** can be an individual health practitioner or a health service organisation.

Individual health practitioners

- **Registered** health practitioners, such as: doctors, nurses, dentists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, occupational therapists, optometrists, osteopaths.
- **Unregistered** health practitioners, such as: nutritionists, masseuses, naturopaths, homeopaths, dieticians, social workers, speech pathologists.

Health service organisations

- These can include public and private healthcare facilities, ambulance services, health education services, pharmacies, mental health services, community health services.

Your complaint can be about any aspect of a health service you are not satisfied with, such as:

- your diagnosis or care
- sharing your information without permission
- inappropriate behaviour by a provider
- the quality of the health service provided
- how a provider has dealt with your complaint.



How to make a complaint

You can lodge a complaint to the Office of the Health Ombudsman online, in writing, over the phone, or in person at our Brisbane office.

We will listen to your concerns and explain how we can help and what you need to do. If you decide to make a complaint, you will need to provide us with as much information as possible, including:

- the details of the health service provider and the issue you are complaining about
- any supporting documentation
- information on the steps you have already taken to resolve your complaint.

The process of making a formal complaint may seem intimidating, but we will work with you to make the process as simple as possible, staying in touch every step of the way.

Assessing your complaint

Assessing your complaint is a very important first step, where we gather all the information we need from you, the health service provider and any relevant experts, to help us make the right decision on how to best manage your complaint.

We will analyse the information you have provided and will also send your complaint to the provider within 14 days.

If we need more information in order to make a decision, we can seek independent expert advice. We can also ask you and/or the health service provider to make a formal submission or provide further information about the complaint.

Submissions and additional information must be provided within 14 days (there are penalties for not meeting this deadline without a reasonable excuse).

You and the provider will be kept up-to-date throughout this process.

We will consider and analyse all the information we receive, and then make our assessment of the complaint and decide whether or not to take further action. Generally, this should take no more than 30 days. All information is reviewed thoroughly, impartially and fairly—we don't take sides.

Making a decision

After assessing your complaint in detail, we will decide whether to take it forward, how to do so, and inform you and the provider of our decision and what will happen next.

If we do take your complaint forward, we may do any, or a combination, of the following:

- attempt to facilitate local resolution
- attempt to conciliate your complaint
- refer your complaint to the provider's registration board, or another organisation
- formally investigate your complaint
- take immediate action against the provider.

If we decide we can't take your complaint any further, we will explain the reasons why and any options you may have available. We will also keep your complaint on record to help us identify any patterns of provider conduct or practice, or systemic healthcare issues.

Further information

Visit: www.oho.qld.gov.au

Email: info@oho.qld.gov.au

Call: 133 OHO (133 646)

Write: PO Box 13281 George Street
Brisbane Qld 4003