

Quarterly performance report

Quarter one 2014–15



Office of the
**HEALTH
OMBUDSMAN**

Listen. Respond. Resolve.

Quarterly performance report—Quarter one 2014–15

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Introduction

This document contains our performance data for the first quarter of the 2014–15 financial year, which was also the first three months of operation for the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).

The OHO commenced operation on 1 July 2014 as Queensland's health service complaints management agency. On commencement, the office not only started receiving enquiries and health service complaints, but assumed responsibility for 289 matters previously managed by the Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC). All matters transitioned from the HQCC that have been reviewed, audited and processed within the OHO's health service complaints management system are integrated within this data.

In addition, during August, the OHO began reviewing current Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) matters to determine those that are most appropriately dealt with by the OHO, and those that will continue to be dealt with by AHPRA. This is in conjunction with the notification of new serious matters by AHPRA to the OHO for determination and action, as appropriate.

Over time, our quarterly data (along with our monthly performance reports) will identify trends, which will inform our work in promoting improved health service delivery by health service providers, and identifying systemic issues. As we continue to monitor our performance data, we will also look for areas of improvement, innovation and greater efficiency.

Importantly, our quarterly performance reporting highlights our commitment to transparency and accountability, and our desire to ensure Queenslanders have confidence in the management of health service complaints.

Data in this report is correct as at 3 October 2014, but is subject to change.

Number of contacts

Number of contacts

Type of contact	Number	Percentage
Complaint	1 031	60.10
Enquiry	625	36.40
Yet to be classified at the end of the quarter	60	3.50
Total	1 716	100.00

This data is based on contacts with the OHO during the quarter. Matters that are 'yet to be classified' are contacts in which not enough information was provided in the first instance to allow for a determination, and additional information is being sought. They can also be matters that came in just before the end of the reporting period and were still being processed.

The number of complaint contacts will not equal the number of decisions made in the table below.

Contacts that are 'yet to be classified' at the time of running this report will continue to be allocated as complaints (and enquiries), as additional information is received, however decisions on these complaints will be registered in next quarter's reporting.

Decisions

Number of decisions made

Number of decisions made	Number	Percentage
Accepted	839	91.39
Not accepted	50	5.45
Decision pending at the end of the quarter	29	3.16
Total	918	100.00

'Decision pending' relates to matters where more information is required before deciding whether to accept or not accept a complaint, or because a matter came in just before the end of the reporting period and is still be processed.

Decisions made within seven days

Decision made within seven days of receiving a complaint	Number	Percentage
Yes	663	75.68
No	213	24.32
Total	876	100.00

Reason for decisions being made outside of seven days

The first three months of operation saw higher than expected levels of new health service complaints being made to the OHO. This was in addition to the 289 matters transitioned from the HQCC, and those transferred from AHPRA to the OHO for management.

Steps were taken, and processes commenced, at the end of July in order to build capacity and improve the timeliness of decision making, while still ensuring all matters are reviewed thoroughly and impartially by trained staff.

The office commenced recruitment of extra staff to assist in the processing of complaints. In addition, the office is refining existing, and implementing new, operational processes to improve the processing of complaints, in alignment with our commitment to continually look for ways of improving our service delivery to meet the needs of Queenslanders. It is expected the results of these actions will start to become apparent over the coming months, and be evident in our next quarterly report.

Health service complaints profile

Main issues raised in complaints

Issue	Number	Percentage
Access	21	2.20
Communication/information	117	12.28
Consent	21	2.20
Discharge/transfer arrangements	14	1.47
Environment/management of facilities	8	0.84
Enquiry service only	1	0.10
Fees/cost	36	3.78
Grievance processes	9	0.94
Medical records	22	2.31
Medication	87	9.13
Professional conduct	113	11.86
Professional health	39	4.09
Professional performance	332	34.84
Reports/certificates	10	1.05
Treatment	123	12.91
Total	953	100.00

These figures are based on complaints that completed the assessment process during the quarter. Basing figures on completed assessments produces accurate reporting of the type(s) of issues identified, as all relevant details of a matter have been identified at the time an assessment is completed. Please note, there can be multiple issues identified within a single complaint.

Number and type of complaints by health practitioner

Practitioner type	Access	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/transfer arrangements	Environment/management of facility	Enquiry service	Fees and costs	Grievance process	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/certificates	Treatment	Total
Alternative care	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	-	3	-	2	12
Chinese medicine	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chiropractor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Dentistry	-	8	2	-	1	-	6	1	2	-	12	1	43	-	14	90
Emergency care	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	3	11
General medical	-	27	4	2	1	-	4	1	3	25	34	15	74	3	27	220
Medical radiation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	4
Medical specialty	-	17	4	1	-	-	-	-	2	6	9	3	40	1	6	89
Nursing	-	4	-	1	-	-	4	-	2	13	17	9	10	2	-	62
Optometry	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	9
Other	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	1	4	-	-	14
Pharmacy	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	-	-	-	-	13
Physiotherapy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Podiatry	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Psychology	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	4	-	-	11
Surgical	1	11	4	1	-	-	4	-	1	1	3	-	32	1	20	79
Not yet known	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	5	-	-	12
Total	1	79	16	5	3	-	23	3	10	56	97	39	222	7	72	633

These figures are based on complaints that completed the assessment process during the quarter. Basing figures on completed assessments produces accurate reporting of the type(s) of issues identified, as all relevant details of a matter have been identified at the time an assessment is completed. Please note, there can be multiple issues identified within a single complaint.

Number and type of complaints by health service organisation

Organisation type	Access	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/transfer arrangements	Environment/management of facility	Enquiry service	Fees and costs	Grievance process	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/certificates	Treatment	Total
Aged care facility	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	5
Allied health service	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	7
Ambulance service	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
Community health service	1	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
Correctional facility	2	2	-	-	1	-	1	2	2	12	-	-	15	-	9	46
Dental service	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	6
Health Service District	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	6
Laboratory service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Licensed Private Hospital	1	3	1	3	1	-	3	-	2	5	-	-	11	-	6	36
Medical Centre	1	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	1	-	5	-	1	14
Mental health service	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	7	1	3	20
Other government department	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other support service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	-	5
Pharmaceutical service	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	7
Public health service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Public Hospital	12	18	3	5	3	1	1	2	6	5	5	-	52	1	29	143
Specialised health service	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	8
Not yet known	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Total	20	38	5	9	5	1	13	6	12	31	16	-	110	3	51	320

These figures are based on complaints that completed the assessment process during the quarter. Basing figures on completed assessments produces accurate reporting of the type(s) of issues identified, as all relevant details of a matter have been identified at the time an assessment is completed. Please note, there can be multiple issues identified within a single complaint.

Assessment

Assessments started and completed

Assessments this quarter	Number
Assessments started	850
Assessments completed	577

Completed assessment timeframes

Assessment timeframes	Number	Percentage
Completed within 30 days	503	87.18
Completed within 60 days*	72	12.48
Completed greater than 60 days**	2	0.34
Total	577	100.00

*Assessments are able to be completed within 60 days when granted an extension of 30 days as a result of legislated requirements being met. Of the 72 assessments completed within 60 days, 13 matters were eligible for and received an approved extension, while the remaining 59 matters ran over due to a higher than expected level of complaints.

**The two matters that were completed outside of 60 days were also as a result of higher than expected levels of complaints.

As [noted earlier in this report](#), steps are being taken to build capacity and improve timeliness, with improvements expected to be seen in the next quarterly report.

Assessment decisions (relevant action)

Type of relevant action	Number	Percentage
Local resolution	201	33.80
Conciliation	19	3.2
Investigation	35	5.90
Referred to AHPRA and the national boards	212	35.63
Referral to another entity	0	0.00
Immediate action	1	0.20
No further action	124	20.84
Total	595	100.00

Total assessment decisions (relevant action) won't equal the total number of assessments (in previous tables), as a single assessment can result in multiple relevant actions.

The figures for the type of relevant action decided in the assessment stage may not correspond with totals for respective relevant actions (e.g. local resolution, conciliation, investigation etc.) due to the time between a decision being made and an action taken crossing over different reporting periods.

Local resolution

Local resolutions started and completed

Local resolution this quarter	Number
Local resolutions started	205
Local resolutions completed	143

The number of local resolutions started in the quarter may not directly match the number of assessment decisions to undertake local resolution, due to the time between a decision being made and an action taken crossing over different reporting periods.

Completed local resolution timeframes

Local resolution timeframes	Number	Percentage
Completed within 30 days	136	95.10
Completed within 60 days*	7	4.90
Total	143	100.00

*Local resolutions are able to be completed within 60 days when granted an extension of 30 days as a result of legislated requirements being met. Of the seven local resolutions completed within 60 days, one matter was eligible for and received an approved extension, while the remaining six matters ran over due to a higher than expected level of complaints.

As [noted earlier in this report](#), steps are being taken to build capacity and improve timeliness, with improvements expected to be seen in the next quarterly report.

Local resolution outcomes

Local resolution outcomes	Number	Percentage
Resolution reached	133	93.00
No resolution reached	10	7.00
Total	143	100.00

Decisions for matters where resolution wasn't reached

Type of relevant action	Number	Percentage
Conciliation	0	0.00
Investigation	0	0.00
Referred to AHPRA and the national boards	5	50.00
Referral to another entity	0	0.00
Immediate action	0	0.00
No further action	5	50.00
Total	10	100.00

Conciliation

Conciliations started and closed

Conciliations this quarter	Number
Conciliations started	51
Conciliations closed	3

The number of conciliations started in the month may not directly match the number of assessment decisions to undertake conciliation, due to the time between a decision being made and an action taken crossing over different reporting periods.

Agreement to participate in conciliation

Agreement to participate in conciliation	Number
Party/ies agreed to participate*	1
Party/ies did not agree to participate*	2
Decisions pending at close of quarter**	14

Once the decision is made to attempt conciliation, both parties must agree to participate in the process. If either one, or both, of the parties do not agree to participate, the conciliation is closed.

*The above data for 'agreed/did not agree' is taken from closed conciliations.

**Decisions pending are all decisions still to be made at the end of the reporting period.

Closed conciliation timeframes

Conciliations closed	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	2	66.66
3–6 months	1	33.33
6–9 months	0	0.00
9–12 months	0	0.00
Total	3	100.00

Closed conciliation outcome

Conciliation outcomes	Number	Percentage
Closed—party/ies chose not to participate*	2	66.66
Agreement reached	1	33.33
No agreement reached	0	0.00
Ended by Health Ombudsman**	0	0.00
Total	3	100.00

* Once the decision is made to attempt conciliation of a matter, both parties must agree to the conciliation process. If either one, or both, of the parties do not agree to participate, the conciliation is closed.

**If the Health Ombudsman ends conciliation the reasons for this decision are to be included.

Open conciliation timeframes

Conciliations open	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	15	31.25
3–6 months	23	47.92
6–9 months	2	4.17
9–12 months	0	0.00
More than 12 months	8	16.67
Total	48	100.00

*28 of the 48 open conciliations are matters that transferred to the OHO from the HQCC.

Investigation

Investigations started and completed

Investigations this quarter	Number
Investigations started	108
Investigations completed	6

The number of investigations started in the month may not directly match the number of assessment decisions to undertake investigation, due to the time between a decision being made and an action taken crossing over different reporting periods.

Closed investigation timeframes

Investigations closed	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	0	0.00
3–6 months	0	0.00
6–9 months	4	66.66
9–12 months	0	0.00
More than 12 months	2	33.33
Total	6	100.00

Open investigation categories

Type of investigation	Number
Health service complaint	174
Systemic issue	0
Another matter*	3

*Matters that are brought to the Health Ombudsman's attention by means other than through a health service complaint or notification.

Open investigation timeframes

Investigations open	Number	Percentage
Less than 3 months	58	51.79
3–6 months	9	8.03
6–9 months	19	16.96
9–12 months	15	13.39
More than 12 months	11	9.82
Total	112	100.00

All investigations that have been open for more than 12 months are published on our investigations register, available on our website www.oho.qld.gov.au

Immediate action

Show cause notices

Two show cause notices were issued in September.

As outlined in the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*, upon receipt of a show cause notice, a health service provider is invited to make a submission within a stated period of time. The Health Ombudsman will then consider the submission before deciding whether to take immediate action against the provider.

Immediate registration action

Immediate registration action was taken against one medical practitioner for professional misconduct, with conditions imposed.

The Health Ombudsman can take immediate action against both registered and non-registered health practitioners if the Health Ombudsman reasonably believes the practitioner poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the public.

For registered health practitioners, the Health Ombudsman can temporarily suspend or impose conditions on registration, and for unregistered practitioners, temporarily restrict or prohibit a practitioner from providing a particular health service.

Demographics

The following demographic data is based on matters that have completed the assessment process. Basing figures on completed assessments produces accurate reporting, as all relevant details of a matter have been identified.

Unless otherwise specified, data is based on healthcare consumers, not the complainant, as the complainant in a matter may not be the consumer of the health service. Matters where the healthcare consumer is an organisation are not included in these figures.

Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	285	49.65
Male	216	37.63
Unknown*	73	12.72
Total	574	100.00

Age

Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 18	25	4.36
18–24 years	20	3.48
25–34 years	60	10.45
35–44 years	74	12.89
45–54 years	83	14.46
55–64 years	75	13.07
65–74 years	42	7.32
Over 75 years	34	5.92
Unknown*	161	28.05

*Not recorded or not provided for a particular matter.

Location of healthcare consumers

Location of healthcare consumers	Number	Percentage
Brisbane	219	38.22
Central West	0	0.00
Darling Downs	24	4.19
Far North	26	4.54
Fitzroy	18	3.14
Gold Coast	72	12.57
Mackay	16	2.79
North West	3	0.52
Northern	23	4.01
South West	1	0.17
Sunshine Coast	48	8.38
West Moreton	9	1.57
Wide Bay-Burnett	29	5.06
Outside Queensland	47	8.20
Unknown	38	6.63

The above data is based on health consumer location

Location of health service providers

Location of health service providers	Number	Percentage
Brisbane	260	45.53
Central West	0	0.00
Darling Downs	25	4.38
Far North	33	5.78
Fitzroy	16	2.80
Gold Coast	89	15.59
Mackay	15	2.63
North West	0	0.00
Northern	23	4.03
South West	1	0.18
Sunshine Coast	38	6.65
West Moreton	4	0.70
Wide Bay-Burnett	26	4.55
Outside Queensland	13	2.28
Unknown	28	4.90

The above data is based on health service provider location.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

Transitional matters

The OHO received an overview of current AHPRA matters on 29 July 2014, with further information requested and provided in August. A review and audit of these matters was carried out to determine the most appropriate action, including identifying those serious matters most appropriately dealt with by the OHO, and those that would continue to be dealt with by AHPRA.

As a result of this review, 53 matters were transitioned during the quarter. An additional 21 matters have been requested for transition, with this due to occur during the second quarter.

Notifications from AHPRA

In addition to the transitional matters above, AHPRA have notified the Health Ombudsman of serious matters, as prescribed under Section 193 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland) (National Law), since 1 July 2014.

Of these matters, the Health Ombudsman:

- requested 20 be referred to the Office of the Health Ombudsman (Section 193(2)(a) National Law)
- asked the National Board to continue to deal with 20 matters (Section 193(2)(b) National Law).

Matters referred to AHPRA

Registered practitioner type	Access	Communication and information	Consent	Discharge/transfer arrangements	Environment/management of facility	Enquiry service	Fees and costs	Grievance process	Medical records	Medication	Professional conduct	Professional health	Professional performance	Reports/certificates	Treatment	Total
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chinese Medicine	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chiropractic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	3
Dental	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	11	1	18	-	3	39
Medical	-	17	3	1	1	-	1	-	2	10	14	20	56	2	26	153
Medical Student	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Medical Radiation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Nursing and Midwifery	-	3	-	1	-	-	4	-	2	12	21	11	6	1	-	61
Occupational Therapy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Optometry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Osteopathy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pharmacy	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	10
Physiotherapy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Podiatry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Psychology	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	4
Total	-	26	3	2	3	-	5	-	5	27	53	37	84	3	29	277

Health Quality and Complaints Commission

The OHO assumed responsibility for existing Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC) matters on 1 July 2014. A total of 289 matters were transitioned to the OHO from the HQCC.

The OHO reviewed these 289 matters and identified the relevant part of the complaints management process to which each matter related and the numbers of matters in each:

- Triage (69)—these are complaints received by HQCC for which further information had been requested and received just prior to 1 July. These matters had not progressed to assessment or resolution by 30 June. These matters were processed as new complaints received by the OHO.
- Assessment (155)
- Local resolution (7)
- Conciliations (31)
- Investigations (12)
- Applications for review (15)—these are applications requesting a review of HQCC complaint management decisions made prior to 1 July 2014. These matters are being dealt with as new complaints.

HQCC matters post-1 July

Of the 289 matters transitioned to the OHO on 1 July, 280 have been processed and are being actioned appropriately within the relevant stages of the OHO health service complaints management process. These matters are reported in the performance data within this document.

The final 9 matters, of the 289 transitioned, have been reviewed in a staged approach and will be entered into the OHO complaints management system in October.