

Take Action! Factsheet 1: Complaints and Feedback in the ACT



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you how to make **health complaints** and give **feedback**.



Giving feedback is when you speak up about your health care.

Take Action! Factsheet 1: **Complaints and Feedback in the ACT**



Feedback can be about good and bad things that happened.



Health complaints are complaints about your health care.

You can complain about anything that you did not like while you were at hospital. This includes people.



Complaints are when you speak up about something wrong.

Complaints are a type of feedback.



When we say feedback we mean good feedback and complaints.

Your right to give feedback



You have the **right** to give good feedback and to make complaints.



Rights are things every person should have.

Health care rights include:

- having enough food and clean water
- getting fair and equal treatment
- being able to make your own health decisions
- getting the health care you need.



The Australian Charter of Health Care Rights tells us about our health care rights.

They are like rules for health care providers.



Giving feedback can be a good thing.

It can:

- Help fix a problem

Take Action! Factsheet 1: **Complaints and Feedback in the ACT**



- Stop a problem from happening again
 - Make sure good things happen again
- Make health care better for everyone.



When you give feedback health care providers must do some important things.



They must:

- Get back to you about your feedback
- They must not take too long



- They must continue to give you good health care even if you made a complaint.



If you need an **interpreter** call 131 450.

This is the Translating and Interpreting Service.



Interpreters speak in other languages.

This includes sign language for people who are deaf.

Interpreters can help people who do not speak or understand English.

Get support



You might need help with giving your feedback.

Here are some people you can ask:



- Someone you trust such as friend or family or a support person.



- Speak to a **health advocate**



- Contact the **ACT Health Services Commissioner**

Take Action! Factsheet 1: **Complaints and Feedback in the ACT**



Health advocates can speak up on your behalf.

They can help you with your feedback.

There is a list of health advocates in the ACT at the end of this fact sheet.



The ACT Health Services Commissioner can help by giving you:

- Free advice
- Help with your complaint
- Support through the complaint.



Take Action

Choose the option that feels right to you

1

Talk to the health professionals treating you



Expect them to:

- Listen to you
- Answer your questions
- Suggest how to make things better.

2

Talk to the person in charge



- Ask to speak to the person in charge
- This might be a senior doctor, manager or team leader.

3

Use their complaints or feedback process



- Every ACT health service must have a feedback process
- It must be easy to find.

4

Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner

- They can investigate the issue
- They can arrange **conciliation**



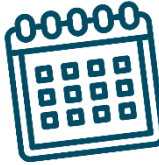
This is when everyone involved gets together.

They all talk through the issue.

They try to solve it together.

Take action when you are ready

1 year



2 years



Giving feedback is best within 2 years.



Some issues are urgent.

You should give your feedback as fast as you can.



With other issues you can wait until you feel ready.

Quick Tips



Think about what you want

You might want the health service to:

- Say sorry
- Explain what happened
- Change the way they do things.

It is OK if you do not know what you want.



Be as clear as you can

Give as many details as you can such as:

- What happened and what the problem was
- When and where it happened
- Who was there



Make a list

Write down the things you want to talk about.

Start with the most important things.



Focus on what matters to you

Try not to talk about other issues.

Stick to the important things in your list.



Stay calm

- People will understand you better
- Take someone you trust to help you stay calm

Keep a record

Take notes of:



- Who you speak with and what they say
- What happened when
- In a meeting you can ask someone you trust to take notes.

Don't give up

You can ask:



- For an update
- How long it will take
- The ACT Health Services Commissioner if you are not happy with what happens.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

Aged, Disability and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

ADACAS offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Advocacy for Inclusion

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Advocacy for Inclusion can provide short-term individual advocacy to people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Carers ACT

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au

Carers ACT provides services, advocacy and information for carers living in the ACT.

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Easy Read document written by The Easy Read Toolbox for HCCA.

Take Action! Factsheet 2: Making a Complaint about a Health Professional



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for the people in ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you how to speak up about your health care.



You can give **feedback** to your health care providers.

Feedback is when you tell someone about:

- Things that are going well
- Things that are not going well
- Things you would like to try.

Take Action! Factsheet 2: **Making a complaint about a health professional**



You can make a **complaint** about your health care provider.

Everyone has the right to speak up about their health care.



A complaint is when you tell someone about problems with your health care.

A complaint is more serious than feedback.

Choose the option that feels right to you

1

Talk to the health professionals treating you



Expect them to:

- Listen to you.
- Answer your questions.
- Suggest how to make things better.

2

Talk to the person in charge



- Ask to speak to the person in charge.
- This might be a senior doctor, manager, or team leader.

3

Use their complaints or feedback process



- Every ACT health service must have a feedback process.
- It must be easy to find.

4

Contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner



- They can investigate the issue.
- They can arrange **conciliation**.

Conciliation is when everyone involved gets together.



- They all talk through the issue.
- They try to solve it together.

5

Contact the Australia Health Practitioner Agency

They are also called APHRA.



- They manage health professionals
- They will look into the issues
- They will do something about the issue.



Aphra can stop a health professional from working.

What about health professionals that do not have to register with APHRA?



Some health care professionals do not have to register with Apha. They include:

- Speech pathologists
- Dietitians
- Exercise physiologists
- Other therapists.



These health care professionals still need to follow the

Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers

It has the rules on what behaviour is ok and not ok for health care workers.

They must:



- Provide safe care
- Ask permission to treat you
- Keep good records and keep your information private



- Act if something goes wrong
- Work with your other health professionals.

Take Action! Factsheet 2: **Making a complaint about a health professional**

They must not:



- Lie about their work
- Cause you harm
- Work while taking alcohol or drugs



- Lie about making you feel better
- Try and take money from you
- Tell you not to see other health professionals.

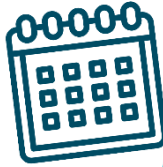


Who can you make a complaint to?

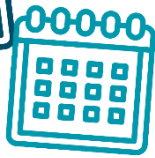
- The person treating you
- Their manager
- The service they work for
- The ACT Health Services Commissioner.

Take action when you are ready.

1 year



2 years



Giving feedback is best within 2 years.

Some issues are urgent.



Being given the wrong medicine is an example of an urgent issue.

You should give your feedback as fast as you can.



With other issues you can wait until you feel ready.

An example of this is if the hospital food was bad.

You could wait to give that feedback.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

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Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adaacas.org.au

ADACAS offers individual advocacy for older people, people with disabilities and carers.

Advocacy for Inclusion

Phone: 02 6257 4005

Email: info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Advocacy for Inclusion can provide short-term individual advocacy to people who identify as having a mental illness or disability.

Carers ACT

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au

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Take Action! Factsheet 3: Tips on Giving Feedback & Making Complaints



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide gives you tips to make it easier to make **health complaints**.



Health complaints are complaints about your health care.



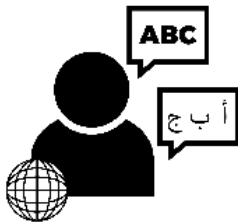
Complaints are when you speak up about something wrong.



Making complaints can be hard to do.
This guide will help you.



If you need an **interpreter** call the free
Translating and Interpreting Service.
They are also called TIS.
Call them on 131 450.



Interpreters speak in other languages.
This includes sign language for people who
are deaf.
Interpreters can help people who do not
speak or understand English.

Decide what you want



Sometimes people want:

- An explanation
- An apology
- A refund
- Or change how the health professional or service works.



You might want more than one thing.

It is OK if you are not sure what you want.



The ACT Health Services Commissioner can help you.

They can give you free advice and talk about what you want.

Their contact information is at the end of this document.

Be clear



When you are saying what happened you should stick to the facts.



Talk about:

- What happened
- When
- Where

- Who was involved
- Why you are unhappy.

Making a complaint in person or on the phone



Sometimes you might talk with someone to make your complaint.

Here are some tips to talk about it:



- Focus on the parts that are most important to you
- Stay as calm as you can
- Say what you want them to do about it



- Be polite and do not get personal
- Get the name and contact details of the person you speak to.



You can:

- Plan and write down what you want to say
- Ask someone to support you
- Ask what will happen next and when.

Making a written complaint



If you are writing a letter or an email:

- Focus on the parts that are most important to you
- Be polite and do not get personal.



Share the facts you know about:

- When the issue happened
- Who was involved
- What you have done so far about the issue.

Take Action! Factsheet 3: **Tips on Giving Feedback & Making Complaints**



You can also send copies of important documents.

Make sure you send a copy. Do not send the original documents.

Keep a record



It is a good idea to write notes about what has happened.

This makes it easier to talk about later.

Things to write down



- Who you spoke to and what their role is
- Date and time you spoke
- Their contact details
- What they said they would do
- When they will do it by.



- Letters or emails you send
- Any communication you get from the health service.

Important contacts

ACT Health Services Commissioner

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au

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Phone: 02 6242 5060

Email: adacas@adacas.org.au

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Take Action! Factsheet 4: What to Expect from Your Complaint



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you what to expect when you have made a **health complaint**.



A health complaint is when you tell someone about problems with your health care.

Everyone has the right to speak up about their health care.

When you make a health complaint



Your complaint will be shared with the health service you make the complaint about.

The service will deal with your complaint.



They will share their side of what happened.



The service will tell you what they have done about your complaint if you ask.

They may not tell you what they have done unless you ask them.

What to expect when you make a complaint



- To be treated with respect from everyone involved

Take Action! Factsheet 4: **What to expect from your complaint**



- That your care will not get worse after you make the complaint



- For your complaint will taken seriously



- You will get a response in a reasonable amount of time



- You will receive an honest response.

Each service handles complaints differently



You have the right to receive a response to your complaint.



You can ask:

- how the complaint process works



- what happen after you have made the complaint



- how long the complaint process takes



- for updates about your complaint.

Public health services



If your complaint is made in the ACT the service will contact you within 5 days:

- By post
- Or email.



They might ask for more information if needed.



If the service needs longer than 5 days you will receive a response within 35 days.

If you are not happy with how your complaint has been handled



If you are unhappy, you can contact the ACT Health Services Commissioner.

Phone: 02 6205 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au



The commissioner will help you with your complaint if it is about:

- Health professionals in the ACT
- Health services in ACT
- Anyone who offers health services in ACT.



The commissioner will help you to get:

- An explanation
- An apology
- A refund

The commissioner can also help change how things happen in the future.



ACT HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

- They can investigate the issue.
- They can arrange **conciliation**.



This is when everyone involved gets together.

- They all talk through the issue.
- They try to solve it together.

What else can the health commissioner do?



The Health Services Commissioner will make changes if the **Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers** has been broken.



They can:

- Change the way the health professional works



- Stop the health professional from working



- Set rules on how the health professional can work



- Warn the public about the health professional or service.

Take Action! Factsheet 5: Your Medical Records



This document was written by the [Health Care Consumers Association](#).



We speak up for people in the ACT.

We work on health care issues.



This guide tells you how to get a copy of your **medical records**.



Your medical records are documents written about you.

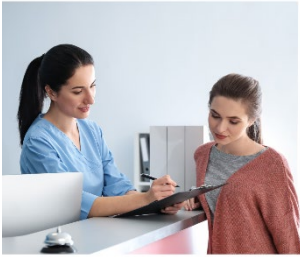
They can help you understand what happened to you.



Your medical record has information about:

- Your illnesses or conditions
- Tests or treatments you have had
- Which doctors you have seen.

How to get your medical records



You can ask to see your medical records any time.



Your medical records are private.

Private means they can only be shared by:



- Health care workers who need to see them to care for you



- People you say can read it.
- This might include your **legal guardian**.
- It might also include someone with **Enduring Power of Attorney**.



These are both legal names meaning that those people can make decisions for you.

These people might be family or friends or someone that works for the government.

Take Action! Factsheet 5: **Your Medical Records**



Each health care provider will have a different medical record for you.

You will need to ask each health care provider



A health care provider is a person or business who care for your health such as:

- A doctor or GP
- A hospital
- A dentist or therapist.



They might not let you see your file.

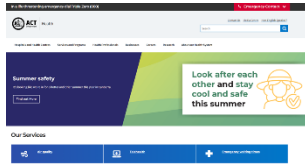
They need to say why you cannot see your file.



You might have to fill out a form first.

If you need your medical records from Canberra Health Services you should:

Take Action! Factsheet 5: Your Medical Records

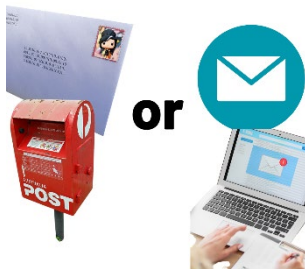


- [Go to their website](#)
- Search for **Accessing your health records** and go to the page about it
- Fill out the form
- Include copies of any other documents the form asks for
- Send it to Canberra Health Services using directions on the form



Other health care providers can include:

- GPs or doctors
- Specialists
- Dentists



They might say you need to ask in writing.

You should send them a letter or an email.



They will probably need your private information, such as:

- Your name
- Your phone number
- Your Medicare number

Take Action! Factsheet 5: Your Medical Records



Your Medicare number is on your Medicare card.

It includes the long number at the top and the number before your name.



You should say:

- What information you need
- How they should give you the information. Your information can be emailed or posted or sent to your doctor.

Who keeps medical records



Not all health care providers need to keep records about you.

You can ask if they have a record about you.

Costs



You will need to pay a fee to some health care providers to see your records.

This covers the cost of them getting your records and sending them to you.

Take Action! Factsheet 5: **Your Medical Records**



In 2024 the ACT public hospitals charge fees to get your medical records.

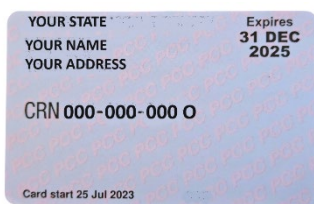
These fees are the most they will charge you for each choice:



- \$17.75 - To see your records with no copies made for you

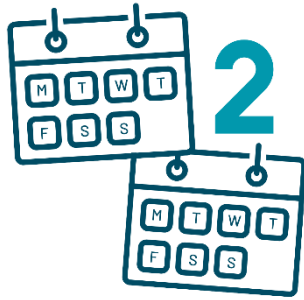


- \$48.75 for paper copies of up to 50 pages
- \$0.40c for each extra page



- If you have a pension card you will pay half of these amounts.

How long it will take to get your records

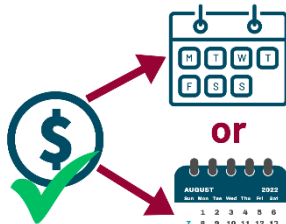


They must reply within 2 weeks of getting your request.



Replying means they do one of these things:

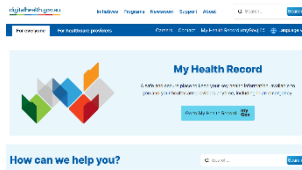
- Ask you to pay their fee
- Give you a copy of your record
- Explain why they will not give you a copy of your record.



If there is a fee to pay they must give you copies:

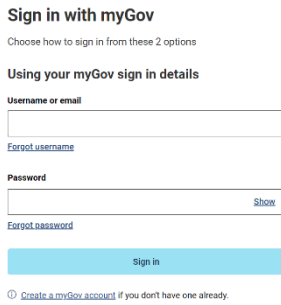
- Within 1 week of getting your payment
- Within 30 days of getting your request
- Whichever happens first.

Using My Health Record



My Health Record is a website.

The Australian Government made it to keep Australian health records.



To see what is on your My Health Record you can:

- Register an account
- Log into your account

- Give your legal guardian and Enduring Power of Attorney access to see your records.



Understanding your medical records



Medical records can be hard to understand.

They often use words you do not know.



Ask your GP or another doctor you choose to help you understand your records.

Request a change to your records

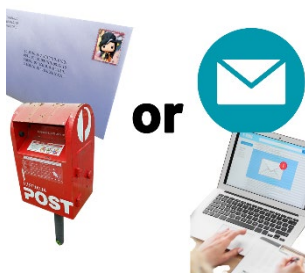


If you find mistakes in your records or information that is wrong you should:

- Contact the health care provider who wrote them
- Ask them to update your records



They might ask you to ask in writing such as a letter or an email.



They might:

- Change your health record
- Make a note in your record about your request.



Sometimes they will decide not to change your records if they think they are right.

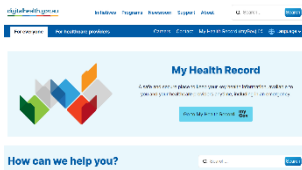


Request a change in My Health Record



If you have found a mistake you can call My Health Record.

Their phone number is 1800 723 471.



You can hide or delete some information on My Health Record yourself.

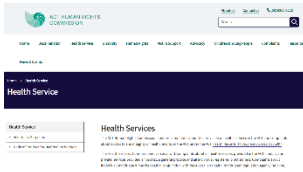
Their website tells you how.



You can also upload any information you need on My Health Record.

You can choose who sees it.

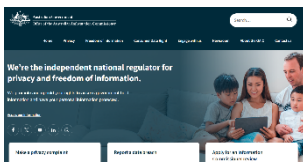
More information



The ACT Health Services Commission can help with complaints and problems about health records.

Phone: 02 6235 2222

Email: HRCIntake@act.gov.au



The Office of the Information Commissioner also has information about accessing your health records.

They are part of the Australian government.

They have information on [their website](#).

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