
Making a complaint on behalf of a patient as a carer

Summary

- As a carer, you have the right to make a complaint about the care or service given to the person you care for.
 - Complaints from carers are treated with the same respect as complaints directly from the person in their care.
 - Make your complaint as soon as possible, either in person or in writing.
 - All state government, local council and government-funded services have processes for hearing and dealing with complaints within their organisation.
 - If you are unhappy with the responses from the service involved or the organisation they represent, you can make a formal complaint to a regulatory body or authority, such as the Health Complaints Commissioner or the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.
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Respect, consideration, recognition and support are some of the principles that guide services in how they should work with carers.

As a carer, you have the right to raise any concerns you may have about the care the person you are caring for receives. Complaints from carers are treated with the same respect as complaints directly from the person in care.

Speaking up

One of the challenges of providing care for someone is knowing when to speak up about the services they get. It is okay to speak up if you think something is wrong.

If you feel that any rights have been ignored during treatment, you can give feedback or make a complaint.

Write it down

It is a good idea to write down your concerns. Make notes during appointments and keep track of dates, times and the people involved. It is also useful to have this information on hand when you need to make a complaint.

Where to start to make a complaint

It is a good idea to make your complaint as soon as possible, either in person or in writing. The longer you wait, the harder it could be to find out the facts and resolve any issues.

Step 1. Speak directly with the healthcare professional or service provider

As a first step, speak with the healthcare professional or service provider involved. It might be a misunderstanding or something that a simple apology could resolve.

Step 2. Speak with someone representing the healthcare service

Services often welcome feedback so they can improve their service. Sometimes it highlights a bigger problem that they need to address. All services have processes for hearing and dealing with complaints within their organisation.

The service may be able to give you an immediate solution, or will try to address your complaint as soon as possible through its complaints process.

Services should keep you updated on their progress in addressing your complaint.

Step 3. Lodge your complaint with a regulatory body or authority

If you are unhappy with the response from the service involved and the organisation they represent, you can make a formal complaint to a regulatory body or authority such as the **Health Complaints Commissioner** (for treatment

by any Victorian healthcare organisation, including private treatment).

It is a good idea to phone the regulatory body or authority first to make sure they are the right organisation to deal with your complaint and to discuss their process.

Getting legal advice as a carer

Depending on your complaint you may need some legal advice.

Victoria Legal Aid

If you or someone you know needs legal advice, **Victoria Legal Aid** can provide free legal advice. Call 1300 792 387 between 8.15am to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday for free advice.

The Law Institute of Victoria – Referral Service

The **Law Institute of Victoria** manages a referral service that can connect you with a legal practitioner. With a referral from the Law Institute of Victoria, your introductory meeting (up to 30 minutes) will be free of charge. After that, standard legal fees will apply.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your service
- Carers Victoria, call **1800 242 636**
- **Health Complaints Commissioner**, call **1300 582 113**
- **Aged Care Complaints Commissioner**, call **1800 550 552**

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