

Making complaints about health, disability and mental health services as a carer



Health and Disability Services
Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

Supporting improvement through complaint resolution.

Who we are

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent Statutory Authority offering an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories.

Our services are free and available to everyone who uses and provides health, disability and mental health services.

What we do

HaDSCO acts impartially and in confidence to support improvements to health, disability and mental health services through resolution and investigation of complaints and providing education and training to service providers in the prevention and resolution of complaints.

HaDSCO encourages that complaints are raised with the service provider in the first instance. A complaint can be lodged by the service user or a nominated representative.

If this proves unsatisfactory, contact HaDSCO to discuss making a complaint and send a completed Complaint Form. Forms can be downloaded from the website

www.hadsco.wa.gov.au or contact HaDSCO to request a form by phone (08) 6551 7600 or email mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au.

Who is a Carer

A Carer is a person who provides ongoing care or assistance to another person with a disability, chronic illness (including mental illness) or a person who, because of frailty, requires assistance with everyday tasks. This definition excludes persons contracted to provide care services and those working as volunteers.

Many fail to identify themselves as a carer, believing they are merely helping a family member or friend.

The Carers Recognition Act 2004 aims to change the culture of service providers so that the impact on carers is considered when services are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed. A key part of the Act requires service providers to comply with the Western Australian Carers Charter. The Carers Charter states:

- Carers must be treated with respect and dignity
- The role of carers must be recognised by including carers in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of services that impact on them and the role of carers
- The views and needs of carers must be taken into account along with the views, needs and best interests of people receiving care when decisions are made that impact on carers and the role of carers
- Complaints made by carers in relation to services that impact on them and the role of carers must be given due attention and consideration.

What you can complain about

Carers may make a complaint on behalf of the person for whom they provide care and also on their own behalf under the Carers Charter. Complaints may include allegations that a health, disability or mental health service provider has acted unreasonably by:

- Failing to comply with the Carers Charter, Disability Service Standards or Mental Health Care Principles
- Refusing to provide a service
- The manner a service was provided
- Providing a service
- Denying or restricting the user's access to records
- Breaching confidentiality
- Charging an excessive fee
- Not effectively dealing with a complaint.

HaDSCO is generally unable to deal with matters that are more than two years old or that have already been determined by a court, registration board or tribunal. In these cases referrals to alternative organisations may be suggested.

Making a complaint

- Talk to the people at the service provider about your problem.
- If your problem is not fixed, or if there are reasons that you do not wish to contact the service provider, contact HaDSCO. You can contact us using the Interpreter Service or National Relay Service if required.
- Your complaint must be in writing on a HaDSCO Complaint Form. Forms are available on our website at www.hadsco.wa.gov.au or contact us to request a copy be sent by post.
- A complaint can be made by the person who received the service or a representative such as a family member, carer or guardian.
- When HaDSCO receives your Complaint Form, we will tell you what we can do.
- If HaDSCO can help, we may ask you or the service provider for more information.
- We will work with you and the service provider to resolve your complaint.
- If we are not the right people to resolve your complaint, we will try and help you find someone who can.

Contact us

Our office is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Complaints and enquiries: (08) 6551 7600 or 1800 813 583 (free from landlines)

Interpreter Service: www.tisnational.gov.au or 131 450

National Relay Service: www.relayservice.gov.au or 1800 555 660

Email: mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au

Web: www.hadsco.wa.gov.au

Post: PO Box B61 Perth WA 6838

Office: Level 2, 469 Wellington Street, Perth

Administration: (08) 6551 7620

Further carer support services including counselling, advice and peer support are available from organisations such as Carers WA on 1300 227 377 (www.carersaustralia.com.au)

This brochure is available in alternative formats on request.