7. Aged Care Complaints Scheme

Most organisations and homes that provide aged care (also known as service providers) do their best to give you quality care and services. However, sometimes issues can occur. If you're concerned about the care or services you receive from an aged care home, home care package or HACC service, you can make a complaint. This way, providers can improve the quality of care and services they provide to you, your loved one or anyone else.

What can I complain about?

You can make a complaint about any area of the care and services you receive from an Australian Government-subsidised service provider. This might include areas such as:

- health and personal care (for example infection control, personal hygiene)
- communication (for example information and internal complaints processes)
- personnel (for example conduct and training)
- physical environment (for example safety, security, cleaning and call bells)
- financial matters
- activities, choice and comfort.

Who do I complain to?

If you feel comfortable, the first thing you should do is let your service provider know about your concerns. Most of the time, your service provider is best placed to resolve complaints and ease your concerns. This can be the quickest and most effective way to find a solution.

However, if you don't feel comfortable speaking with your service provider, or if your complaint hasn't be resolved, you can contact the Aged Care Complaints Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme is a free service.

If they are unable to help you, they will tell you why and either suggest who you can contact or refer you to other organisations, such as a state-based Health Care Complaints Commission or the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.
How do I contact the Scheme?

- Online – make your complaint online via the Department of Social Services website
- Telephone – call 13 14 50 and tell them you want to contact the Aged Care Complaints Scheme
- In writing – address your written complaint to
  - Aged Care Complaints Scheme
  - Australian Department of Social Services
  - GPO Box 9820
  - (Your capital city and state/territory)

What do I include in my complaint?

If you are making a complaint online or over the telephone, you will be guided through the process and told what kind of information you need to give. If you are writing a letter of complaint, make sure it includes:

- your name, address and telephone number unless you would like to remain anonymous
- the date you are lodging your complaint
- details of your complaint, such as specific dates of events
- the name of the aged care service provider and the state or territory where it is located
- the name of the person receiving care.

You can complain anonymously but the Scheme can only contact you to discuss your complaint or provide information about the outcomes if you provide your contact details.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint, including:

- you (the person receiving care)
- your partner
- your family members
- your friends
- your representatives
- aged care staff
- carers
- volunteers
- health professionals.

What happens after I lodge a complaint?

When you lodge a complaint with the Scheme, the process will be explained to you, including your options. You may be asked for more details and what you would like to happen. The more information you provide when you lodge your complaint, the better – it will help the Scheme understand all the issues and determine the best way to resolve your concerns. You can read more about the Scheme's process at the Scheme’s FAQ page.

Asking for a review of a decision or process

If you're not satisfied with the Scheme’s decision or how your complaint was handled, you can ask for a review. You can only request a review after the
complaint process has been finalised. After receiving the decision letter, you have 28 days to request a review. You can contact the Scheme by telephone or in writing and request a review. The request must state the reasons why you are asking the Scheme to review the decision.

**What if I'm not happy with the review outcome?**

If you are not satisfied with our decision, depending on which services you receive, you can ask for an independent review from either the Aged Care Commissioner or the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Your decision letter from the Scheme will tell you whether you can appeal to the Ombudsman or the Commissioner based on the services you receive.

You can also ask the Aged Care Commissioner to look at our complaints process to help us to improve. To find out more you can contact the Aged Care Commissioner by calling 13 14 50. The Commonwealth Ombudsman can review complaints about the actions and decisions of the Aged Care Commissioner and any process of the Scheme. To find out more contact the Ombudsman’s office at the Ombudsman website.

My Aged Care 1800 200 422

🔒 Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) 131 450