



# Using complaints to drive positive workplace change

*“From one complaint, there can be redress for the individual and system changes for many others to improve service delivery.” – Ms Sarah Cowie, Director, HaDSCO*

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent Statutory Authority that receives complaints about health, disability and mental health services in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories.

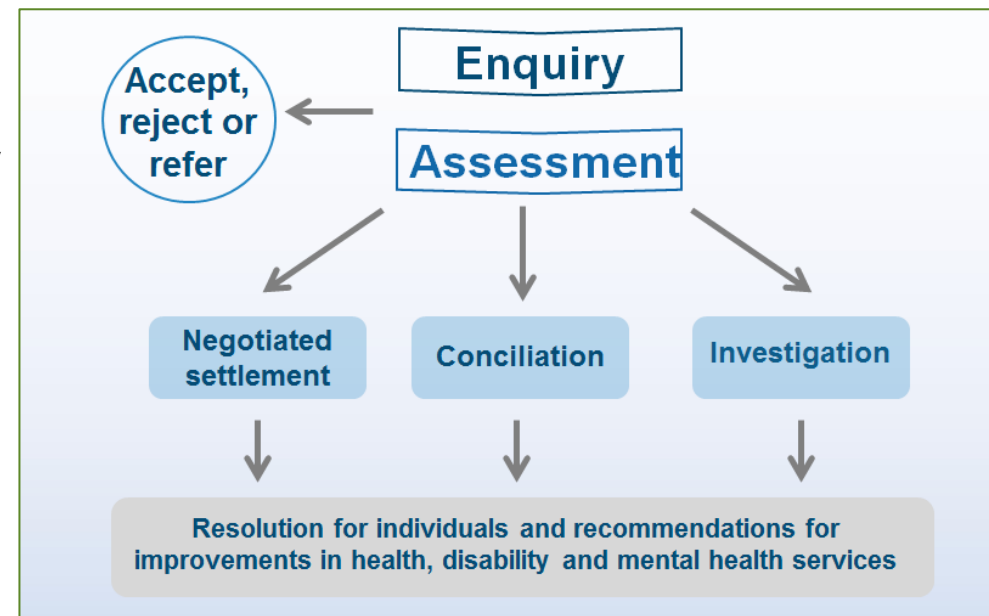
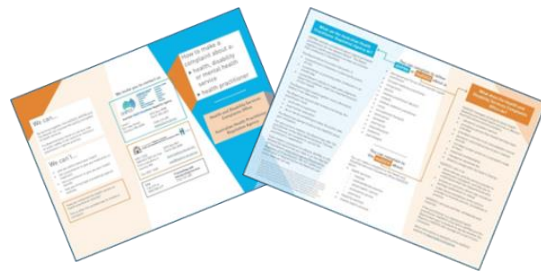
## Service One

### 1. Assessment, negotiated settlement, conciliation and investigation of complaints

Complaints can be effectively resolved at the provider/service level and can present opportunity for positive change in the workplace and in professional practice.



HaDSCO is required to consult with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) about complaints relating to registered health professionals.



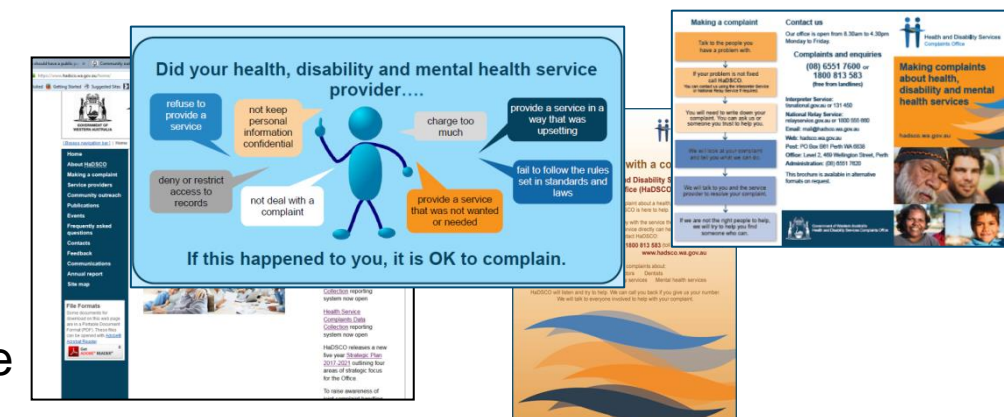
### Common Health Complaint Themes:

- Treatment
- Communication and information
- Fees and costs
- Access

## Service Two

### 2. Education and training in the prevention and resolution of complaints

- HaDSCO utilises complaints data to inform service improvement opportunities.
- Educative tools include:
  - Community outreach and sector engagement
  - Guidelines for Handling Complaints about Mental Health Services
  - Aboriginal, youth and disability specific brochures and information sheets, and more



## Complaints and service improvement

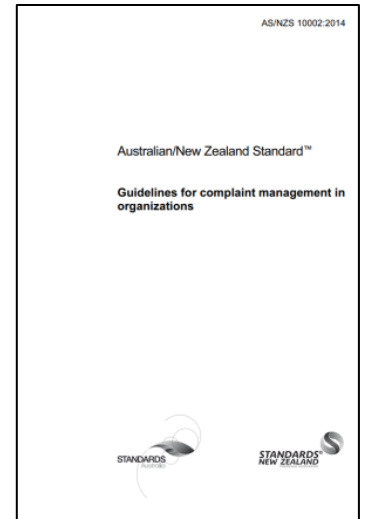
There are measures and strategies that health service providers can adopt in order to prevent complaints, or in the event of receiving them, to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

## Effective complaint handling systems

When things do go wrong and a complaint is received, a best practice complaint handling system goes a long way to preventing the escalation of complaints, and to ensuring positive outcomes at both the individual and systemic levels.

The Australian/New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (AS/NZS 10002:2014) outline benchmark principles for organisations to follow. They key ones are:

1. Enabling complaints
2. Managing complaints
3. Managing the parties
4. Accountability and learning



## Person-centred practice in complaints management



Person-centred, equitable, seamless access, as per Strategy 4 in the Sustainable Health Review Final Report, is key to complaint prevention at the service level.

Person centred practice in a complaints context includes:

- Positive complaints resolution culture
- Visible and accessible, various modes for receiving complaints



## Positive outcomes from complaints

Redress for individuals	System/service improvements
Apologies	Review or change of policy or procedure
Explanations offered	Change in process for better access
Refunds, fee waivers, reimbursements and goodwill payments	Staff education and training
Access to medical records	Improved communication
Access to services	



*“I just wanted to express my sincere thank you for your help with my complaint about [the] hospital...I am happy that the outcome might help other people in a similar situation.”*

- Complainant to HaDSCO, 2018

## Contact HaDSCO

**Complaints and enquiries:** (08) 6551 7600

**Reception:** (08) 6551 7620

**Freecall from landlines:** 1800 813 583

**Email:** [mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au)

**Office hours:** Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4.30pm

