

Not happy with an alcohol and other drug treatment service?

Make a complaint – get support

If you need help to treat an alcohol or other drug issue, you deserve safe, high-quality support

Who can complain about drug treatment services?

Alcohol and other drug treatment services are health services.

Anyone can raise issues of concern or make a complaint about a health service. This includes you, your family, your friends, staff, volunteers, carers, or a member of the wider community.

Your concerns might include:

- the service you receive (such as being poor quality, unsafe, not being accessible)
- not receiving enough information or choice about your treatment, options, and costs
- being misled about treatment
- being denied respect, dignity or privacy
- not respecting your culture.

Where do I start?

If you are not happy with a health service, it is a good idea to first try to contact them directly.

In many cases, directly contacting the service can be the quickest and easiest way to fix a problem.

Complaints can help health services to identify problems and can sometimes lead to quality improvements for others, too.

If you feel you cannot approach the service or are not satisfied with their response, you should explore your options to escalate your complaint (see over the page).

How to make a complaint to a health service

- If the issue is easy to explain, or caused only a minor inconvenience, try calling the service.
- If the issue is more complex or serious, you may prefer to make your complaint in writing so there is a record of it.
- Be clear about what went wrong, who was involved and when it happened.
- Be clear about the outcome you want – such as an apology or refund.
- Ask for a response to be supplied in writing.
- The service should promptly acknowledge they have received your complaint.
- Once your complaint has been acknowledged, allow the health service time to respond to your complaint. They may take up to three months to respond.
- If you are not satisfied with the health service's response, call the **Health Complaints Commissioner** on 1300 582 113 for help.

From <<https://hcc.vic.gov.au>>

To receive this publication in an accessible format email aod.enquiries@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, September 2018.

ISBN 978-1-76069-631-3 (Online/pdf/MS Word)

Available at Alcohol and other drug client charter and resources

<<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-service-standards-guidelines/aod-client-charter>>



Health
and Human
Services

I need to escalate my complaint

Under the *Health Complaints Act 2016*, all Victorian health services must ensure that comments or complaints about them can be made easily and that any comments or complaints are addressed.

Services	When should I get in touch?	Examples of complaints
<p>Health Complaints Commissioner 1300 582 113 <https://hcc.vic.gov.au></p>	<p>If you have concerns about an alcohol and other drug treatment service provided by any organisation or person in Victoria.</p> <p>Anyone can make a complaint.</p> <p><i>If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, you should get their permission before lodging a complaint</i></p>	<p>Unsatisfactory or unsafe treatment Admission or referral problems Poor communication Lack of respect or privacy Negligent or unprofessional behaviour Mishandled health information</p>
<p>Department of Health and Human Services 1300 650 172 <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint></p>	<p>If you are unhappy with services the department provides, funds or regulates.</p> <p>Friends and family can complain on your behalf.</p>	<p>Government-funded health service has not complied with the <i>Alcohol and other drug program guidelines</i> A government-funded service has not complied with the <i>Client Charter</i></p>
<p>Victoria Police Emergency: 000 Switchboard: (03) 9247 6666 <http://www.police.vic.gov.au></p>	<p>If you or someone you care about may have been the victim of an assault or other crime, contact Victoria Police immediately</p>	<p>Experience of assault Experience of other crime</p>
<p>Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 55 81 81 <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au></p>	<p>If you need advice about your rights under the Australian Consumer Law, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing treatment services delivered by private services.</p> <p>Friends and family can call on your behalf.</p>	<p>Refund disputes Serious instances of false or misleading representations</p>

You may also wish to seek independent legal advice.

For more information, see <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/legal-assistance>>.

I need help with an alcohol or other drug problem

Start the conversation now: anyone can call Directline on 1800 888 236

It's free, anonymous, confidential and available 24-hours a day for information, counselling and referral