

Handling complaints about your service

The Disability Services Commissioner (DSC) can take complaints about Victorian disability service providers. If we receive a complaint about your service, we will work with you and the person making the complaint to resolve the complaint.

What happens after a complaint is made?

The first step involves assessing whether the complaint is able to be handled by DSC (in scope) and whether we have the necessary information.

If the complaint is made on behalf of a person with a disability we will ask whether they are aware of the complaint and if they have given consent. We will seek their views where possible. Our focus is on what is important to and for the person receiving the service, and we seek to involve them in the process as much as possible.

We will work with the person who made the complaint and your service to achieve the earliest possible resolution of the complaint.

How long will it take to assess a complaint?

Under the *Disability Act* 2006, assessment may take up to 90 days. The majority of complaints are resolved during the assessment period.

Your prompt response to phone calls, emails and letters will help to facilitate this process.

What happens during the assessment of the complaint?

We work with the person making the complaint and with your service to fully understand the issues in the complaint and how it could be resolved.

Your service may be asked to write a response to the complaint which focuses on information and possible actions that could offer a resolution to the issues raised. Documentation such as a behaviour support plan or a person-centred plan may also be requested.

What are ways that complaints can be resolved?

The resolution of complaints may involve:

Acknowledgement: of how the situation has affected the person and their expectations of a quality service;

Answers: an explanation of what happened or information that may be needed to address the person's concerns;

Actions: agreements on steps to address the concerns and improve services;

Apology: for some people, a genuine apology may be all or part of what is sought.

Resolving complaints nearly always involves finding ways to improve communication.

What happens next?

The assessment process can result in:

- (a) The complaint may be **resolved** during assessment. The majority of complaints are resolved during the assessment stage.
- (b) DSC may decide to **conciliate** the complaint. This is where DSC will try to help the person who made the complaint and your service to reach an agreement about how the complaint can be resolved; or
- (c) DSC may decide to **investigate** the complaint.
- (d) DSC may decide that we are unable to consider the complaint or that no further action by our office is possible; and/or
- (e) DSC may decide to provide advice or referrals to deal with the issues identified in the complaint.

At the end of the assessment process, we will write to the person who made the complaint and your service about DSC's decision and outline the information that led to this decision.

When is DSC unable to consider a complaint?

DSC is unable to consider a complaint if it is not related to the provision of Victorian disability services.

This might include complaints about access to services, employment, health or education services. This might also include matters that have been or will be investigated or determined by another body, court, board or tribunal.

Where possible, we will provide details of other avenues that may assist with resolving the complaint.

What can I expect from DSC?

You can expect our work to reflect:

- Our Values: rights; fairness; respect; and
- Our Principles: accessible; person-centred; accountable; responsive; and excellence.

We draw attention to any relevant principles and requirements in the *Disability Act 2006* and standards for disability services in everything we do, and recommend that your service do the same.

Contact us

Phone (preferred)	1800 677 342 (free call from landlines) or TTY 1300 726 563
Website	www.odsc.vic.gov.au
Fax	03 8608 5765
Email	complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au
National Relay Service	www.relayservice.gov.au then 1800 677 342

Skype calls are available by appointment. You can request a Skype call by phone, TTY, fax or email.