

Compliments and Complaints

Hunter New England (HNE) Health welcomes your feedback, whether it is acknowledging great service or staff through a compliment, or letting us know about concerns relating to your healthcare, or other things we can be doing better through a complaint.

All feedback is viewed as an opportunity to improve your healthcare service.

Compliments

If you receive care or attention which you feel warrants complimenting, you are encouraged to let the team know directly. Or you may like to register your appreciation with us:

- in writing to the facility
- in writing to the Chief Executive at Locked Bag 1, New Lambton, NSW 2305;
- by email: HNELHD-SRC@health.nsw.gov.au;
- by phone, to 1800 605 172 or
- through the Hunter New England Health website.

Complaints

Hunter New England Health aims to manage complaints in line with NSW Health Policy PD2006_073 Complaint Management.

We want to ensure that an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism exists for dealing with complaints.

Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved directly with the staff or manager of the service concerned. This is usually the fastest and most direct way for your concerns to be heard and addressed.

If you are uncomfortable talking to the staff directly about a complaint you should ask to speak to a manager. Contact numbers for all Hunter New England Health services can be found at hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Lodging a Complaint

Complaints can be made in person, in writing, by phone, or via an online feedback form.

Directly

Written, in person or verbal feedback to the service: contact numbers and addresses for services and facilities can be found at hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Strategic Relations and Communication Unit

Via email: HNELHD-SRC@health.nsw.gov.au
In writing: Locked Bag 1, New Lambton, NSW 2305

Telephone

Via the District's Feedback Line: 1800 605 172 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm).

Online

Via HNELHD's website:
hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/Feedback

Timeframe for responses

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. In line with NSW Policy, we are committed to responding to complaints in the following timeframes:

- Your complaint will be acknowledged within five calendar days of receipt. For complaints made in person or verbally this will usually occur at the time the complaint is lodged. Where complaints are lodged in writing, or online, you will be contacted to discuss your concerns.
- Your complaint should be resolved within 35 days after receipt of the complaint, although more complex complaints may take longer. HNE Health will advise you if this is the case.
- If your complaint is not able to be resolved within 35 days after receipt, you will be provided an update detailing reasons for the delay and an update on the investigation.

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Complaint outcomes and expectations

It is important you tell us what you expect to occur as a result of your complaint. This will assist staff in resolving your complaint. For example, you may want an apology, explanation or change to occur that will prevent other patients or clients experiencing similar issues. If we are unable to meet your expected outcome, you will be advised of this, including the reason why.

Confidentiality

Staff involved in complaints handling are required to treat all information as confidential. The name/s of complainants or any other identifying information will only be provided to staff involved in managing the complaint, and may be provided to staff identified as a respondent to a complaint.

If your complaint is about the care or treatment of another person, the service may require the consent of the patient or client for information about their personal treatment to be provided to you, or evidence that you have a right to this information (such as Enduring Power of Attorney).

Complainants are protected from any repercussions, reprisals or victimisation as a result of making a complaint. If you have made a complaint, or provided information regarding a complaint, and feel you have been disadvantaged as a result, you should contact a Senior Manager, or the Strategic Relations and Communication Unit.

Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Your rights and responsibilities as a complainant are as follows:

- You can report an incident without lodging a complaint.
- To seek a local management solution prior to making a formal complaint.
- To pursue the complaint through alternative mechanisms (such as the Health Care Complaints Commission) should you feel HNE Health has not dealt with your complaint satisfactorily.
- To be kept informed of all decisions and progress made

- To know what new steps will be taken to resolve or review a complaint.
- Protection against any victimisation or harassment because you have raised a complaint.
- To be represented by someone else (as an advocate) if you wish.
- To raise your concerns at the earliest possible stage, and to provide staff with as much information as possible to assist in the effective resolution of the complaint.
- To have an observer of your choosing present at any meetings that you may attend relating to your complaint.
- Not to make vexatious, malicious or unfounded complaints.

Dissatisfied with the way your complaint was handled?

If you have concerns about the management of your complaint you can contact the:

- Manager of the service or facility
- Hospital or District Executive
- Strategic Relations & Communication Unit

If you are dissatisfied with the way HNE Health has managed your complaint, you can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC), which is independent of Hunter New England Health:

- Email: hccc@hccc.nsw.gov.au
- Phone: 1800 043 159

Interpreter Services

Assistance is available from the Interpreter Service, if required. Contact the Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) by:

- Telephone on 4924 6285 and arrange three way interpreting;
- Arrange for an 'on site' interview using a health care interpreter;
- Writing down the information for the HCIS to translate

If you have hearing or speech impairments, you can contact HNE Health through the National Relay Service (NRS).

Simply call 133 677 and provide the number you want to call.