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| 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.

# 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 [Health Complaints Commissioner](https://hcc.vic.gov.au) <https://hcc.vic.gov.au>

# 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

### Health Complaints Commissioner

Phone number: 1300 582 113

Website: [Health Complaints Commissioner](https://hcc.vic.gov.au/) <https://hcc.vic.gov.au>

#### When should I get in touch with the Health Complaints Commissioner?

If you have concerns about an alcohol and other drug treatment service provided by any organisation or person in Victoria.

Anyone can make a complaint.

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, you should get their permission before lodging a complaint

#### Examples of complaints to the Health Complaints Commissioner:

* Unsatisfactory or unsafe treatment
* Admission or referral problems
* Poor communication
* Lack of respect or privacy
* Negligent or unprofessional behaviour
* Mishandled health information.

### Department of Health and Human Services

Phone number: 1300 650 172

Website: [Making a complaint](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint) <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>

#### When should I get in touch with the Department of Health and Human Services?

If you are unhappy with services the department provides, funds or regulates. Friends and family can complain on your behalf.

#### Examples of complaints to the Department of Health and Human Services:

* Government-funded health service has not complied with the *Alcohol and other drug program guidelines*
* A government-funded service has not complied with the *Client Charter.*

### Victoria Police

Emergency: 000

Switchboard: (03) 9247 6666

Website: [Victoria Police](http://www.police.vic.gov.au) <http://www.police.vic.gov.au>

#### When should I get in touch with Victoria Police?

If you or someone you care about may have been the victim of an assault or other crime, contact Victoria Police immediately.

#### Examples of complaints to Victoria Police

* Experience of assault
* Experience of other crime.

### Consumer Affairs Victoria

Phone number: 1300 55 81 81

Website: [Consumer Affairs Victoria](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au>

#### When should I get in touch with Consumer Affairs Victoria?

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.

Friends and family can call on your behalf.

#### Examples of complaints to Consumer Affairs Victoria:

* Refund disputes
* Serious instances of false or misleading representations.

You may also wish to seek independent legal advice. For more information, see [Legal Assistance](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/legal-assistance) <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.

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