

Writing a letter or email of complaint to your health service provider

SA Health wants to give all patients, consumers, carers, families and the community the best health care experience possible.

We welcome feedback and encourage you to tell us about your concerns.

[Your feedback is important information sheet](#) provides an overview of the steps taken to address your concerns, and a list of contacts for each health site.

Writing an email or letter of complaint is one way of letting us know about your concern. It gives the appropriate health service a chance to think about the issues you raised and respond thoughtfully.

If you choose to make a complaint in writing, here are some hints to help you.

We suggest your email or letter include the following points

Who was involved?

- > Give your own name, and preferred contact details such as address and telephone number or email address
- > If you are writing on behalf of someone else, provide their name and your relationship to them, (eg friend, son, wife) and whether they know you are writing the letter.
- > Provide the name and title of the health professionals involved (if known), service area and the name of the health facility.

What happened?

- > Describe the events leading to the complaint and provide dates and times.

Where did things go wrong?

- > Include a list of your specific concerns (eg breach of confidentiality, lack of information, the health professional was in a hurry). If the list is long, number the items in order of importance.

Why are you making this complaint?

- > Look back over your list of concerns and outline what you would like to happen (e.g. an apology, information about your condition, an explanation, further treatment, to provide feedback about the service you received, changes to improve the service).

What questions would you like answered?

- > Consider how you want your concerns addressed. For example, you might want to meet with the health provider in person to discuss the issues you have raised and to work out ways to resolve your concerns. Include this information in your letter.
- > If you would like the staff member or health service to provide a written reply, include this request in your email or letter.
- > If you would be happy to discuss the matter on the telephone, include this option in your email or letter. Ensure you include in your email or letter whether you are willing to receive a telephone call from the health care provider.

Letter writing strategies

- > Once you have answered the above questions, you have what you need to write a letter of complaint.
- > If you feel you are not making progress with your email or letter, you may find it helpful to talk it over with a friend or family member, or to have a break and come back to it later. The email or letter does not have to be perfect. Your concerns will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately no matter how they are presented.
- > It is usually a good idea to read over what you have written to see if there is anything you want to add or change before you send the email or sign the letter.
- > Always keep a copy of your email or a copy of the letter before sending it to the health service.

Sending your email or letter

You can choose to address your letter to the Consumer Advisor, Chief Executive or General Manager of the health service. Your email or letter will be forwarded to the appropriate health service representative to be followed up.

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For more information

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