

- All consumers have a right to complain
- Dissatisfaction is determined by YOU
- Making a complaint is not saying that the agency or worker is bad
- It doesn't mean you are 'making trouble' for staff
- Agencies must not victimise you if you make a complaint

A complaint may also be known as a:

- concern
- problem
- issue
- worry
- something that you are not happy with.

Why complain?

There are important benefits of making a complaint:

- you are more likely to get what you need
- it can help others in similar situations
- it can help to improve services
- it can help to raise bigger issues, like policies and funding
- you can participate in decisions that affect your life.

Tips for making a complaint

Knowledge – arm yourself

- Ask for information about the issue. Do you have all the facts? Make sure there is not a simple misunderstanding. It is good to find out about the organisation's policies.
- If your concern is about a decision made by the organisation you are entitled to ask for 'reasons for decision' in writing. This gives the services a chance to explain the decision and why it was made and it will also clarify the situation for you. DON'T be afraid to ask questions.
- You should have been given information when you first started using the service, including information about the process for handling complaints. If you don't have the information about their complaints-handling process, request it from the service.

Think things through

- Identify the key issues in the complaint.
- Think about what actually happened?
- When and where did it happen?
- Clarify the issue – what is it that affects you?
- What outcome do you want? For example do you want an apology, change in policy, a change in the decision? Identify some options for resolving your complaint.

Keep records

- It's a good idea for you to record information about the issue, what you have done to try to sort it out and who you have been dealing with. Make a folder for all correspondence.
- It is usually best to write a letter of complaint, particularly if you are dealing with a large organisation. Ask someone to assist you. If you write, someone will be given the job of answering your letter and it is more likely to be directed to the right area or person.
- However, an initial phone call may help clarify some of the issues, or may help you understand the organisation's complaint handling procedure.

Follow the Process

- Find out what process the organisation has for people who want to make a complaint.
- You can ask the organisation about their complaints process at any time.
- Make sure you are talking to the right person. That is the person responsible for addressing the problem.
- Always request that your letter or phone call be acknowledged in writing. Ask the organisation for an estimate of how long it will take to deal with your complaint – if there is urgency involved, let them know and explain why.

Be persistent

- If nothing happens, call or write again to the organisation to check on the progress of your complaint. If they are unable to provide you with an update, then make it clear to the person you are dealing with that the problem will not go away unless it is resolved.

What to do if unsuccessful

- If your complaint is not resolved or is not dealt with in a reasonable time, you may want to take it to further.
- You can go to the next level of management.
- You can complain to an Ombudsman.

Act sooner rather than later

Don't leave things too late. Things usually get worse if you don't act straight away – it is best to raise issues quickly and directly with the worker involved or their supervisor, before making a formal complaint.

CONTACT US

Complaints Free Phone: **0800 802 602**

Our Offices:

Auckland	Wellington	Christchurch
Level 10 55-65 Shortland Street PO Box 1960 Auckland	Level 14 70 The Terrace PO Box 10 152 Wellington	Level 6 764 Colombo Street PO Box 13 482 Christchurch
Telephone: (09) 379 6102 Fax: (09)377 6537	Telephone: (04) 473 9533 Fax: (04) 471 2254	Telephone: (03) 366 8556 Fax: (03) 365 7935

EMAIL

Complaints	complaint@ombudsmen.parliament.nz
General information or enquiries	office@ombudsmen.parliament.nz
Website	www.ombudsmen.parliament.nz



It's OK to complain!

