



Top tips for registered providers

Building a strong complaints system



Strong systems and good complaints handling leads to better care for older people

Complaints are a sign of a strong complaints system that centres the rights of older people.

Older people feeling able to exercise their right to make complaints and have them handled fairly and transparently is a key factor in empowering older people and their supporters. Our top tips for a strong complaints system include:

- Make it easy for older people and their supporters to raise concerns or make a complaint.
- Tell older people how to make a complaint when they first use your service. Remind them often.
- Empower older people in your care to understand and use their right to complain without fear of punishment. Make sure they know they can contact us if you or a worker is not acting in line with their rights.
- Create a culture that welcomes complaints and sees them as an opportunity to improve.

Complaints are part of providing a good service. It's how you respond to complaints and address the concerns that matters.

How to resolve complaints in a way that is accessible, confidential, quick and fair

- Listen carefully to the person making the complaint. Understand their concerns.
- Acknowledge what went wrong and how it affected the older person. Apologise. This can help you resolve matters quickly and improve your relationship with the people involved.
- Ask what the person making the complaint wants and write it down. Let them know if what they want is possible.
- Make sure a senior staff member is in charge of responding to and managing complaints.
- Involve the older person. Speak with their supporters, if they have them.
- Start working to resolve the complaint straight away.
- Be clear about what you'll do to resolve the complaint and when you'll do it. Let them know how long this could take.
- Give the older person and their supporters regular updates, even if you don't have much to report.
- At the end of the process, openly and honestly explain what happened and what you did to resolve the complaint. Let the older person and their supporters know how you'll prevent the issue from happening again. This, acknowledging what went wrong, and apologising are key parts of [open disclosure](#).

- Ask the older person and their supporters for feedback on how you handled the complaint.
- Consider how you could apply learnings from the complaint to improve your policies and processes.

If you notice something has gone wrong, you can speak to the people affected and try to resolve the issue proactively, before they make a complaint. This helps build trust and confidence in your service.

More information

- If someone needs help making a complaint, or wants support from an advocate, you can direct them to the [Older Persons Advocacy Network](#) (OPAN) on **1800 700 600**.
- Anyone can make a complaint about aged care to the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#) on **1800 951 822**.
- Our [Complaints handling checklist](#) highlights the activities and systems required to strengthen your complaints handling process and the resources available to help you.
- Our [Better practice guide to complaints handling](#) outlines how to:
 - set up an effective complaints system
 - meet your obligations
 - encourage a positive complaints culture that centres the rights of older people.

You can find the guide and more information at agedcarequality.gov.au.

All information in this publication is correct as of 1 November 2025.



Phone
1800 951 822



Web
agedcarequality.gov.au



Write
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city