

POLICY

Office of the Health Ombudsman Complaints Management

PL 2013/##
Version No. 1.0

POLICY STATEMENT

Metro South Hospital and Health Service ('Metro South Health') is committed to meeting the complaints management requirements stipulated by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).

The OHO from 1 July 2014 is responsible for the health complaints functions previously performed by the Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC).

To ensure compliance with relevant legislation all complaints received via OHO will be managed in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

This policy applies to Metro South Executive Services, Patient Liaison and Consumer Liaison Services, and all employees responsible for handling health service complaints of any kind.

OUTCOME

Adhering to this policy will ensure that Metro South Health meets the OHO requirements for a 14 day time frame to respond to requests for information and formal notices. This will support efforts to deal with health complaints in an expeditious, thorough and fair manner, as stipulated in the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*.

PRINCIPLES

1. All health service complaints previously received by the Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC) are now managed by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).
2. Individuals and organisations can lodge complaints against public, private and not-for-profit health service providers in Queensland, including hospitals and General Practitioner clinics, as well as individual registered and unregistered practitioners.
3. Under sections 48 and 54 of the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*, OHO can require information by notice from a complainant, a health service provider or any other relevant person, which is obtained by means of a formal notice.
4. Upon receipt of a formal notice from OHO, the recipient (Metro South Health) has up to 14 calendar days in which to respond. Failure to comply with this notice, without a reasonable excuse, can result in a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units.

5. Metro South Executive Services acts as the single point of contact to whom OHO sends all information requests and notices.
6. Metro South Network/Service Executive Directors or delegates hold authority for authorising responses to OHO following information requests and notices.
7. Metro South Health Hospitals and Service is responsible for internally investigating each complaint and responding to OHO within the given timeframe.
8. If the matter involves allegations of inappropriate employee behaviour, that component of the complaint should be referred to the relevant Workforce unit and the Manager of Staff Complaints to deal with in accordance with the Workforce Services procedure on Investigations.

LEGISLATION OR OTHER AUTHORITY

- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*
- *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*
- *Industrial Relations Act 2011*
- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- *Mental Health Act 2000*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Attachment 1: Office of the Health Ombudsman Complaints Management Procedure

Attachment 2: Notification to Health Ombudsman Procedure

DEFINITIONS

Complaint: A consumer complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction on a consumer's behalf to a responsible party.

Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO): Queensland's health service complaints agency responsible for managing health service complaints received from individuals and organisations.

Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC): Responsible for complaints management functions now provided by the Office of the Health Ombudsman until operations ceased on 30th June 2014.

Patient / Consumer Liaison Service: Responsible for providing responsive, high quality complaint and compliment management services within Metro South Health facilities and services.

Penalty Units: In Australian law, a penalty unit (abbreviated as PU) is an amount of money used to compute pecuniary penalties for many breaches of statute law. Fines are calculated by multiplying the value of one penalty unit by the number of penalty units prescribed for the offence.

Policy Number

PL 2013/## (assigned by Policy Officer)

Policy Name

Office of the Health Ombudsman Complaints Management Policy

Supersedes

Nil

Policy Author

Jenifer Itel, Senior Project Officer, Health Reform

Portfolio Executive Director

Dr Michael Daly, Executive Director of Clinical Governance

Approving Officer

Dr Richard Ashby, Health Service Chief Executive

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2 years later

