



Talk to us!

Supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to make complaints

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can sometimes struggle when it comes to making a complaint about government services. Here's how you can help them overcome some of the barriers they may face.

Barriers to making complaints for people from a CALD background

People from a CALD background may experience a number of barriers to making a complaint. It is important for agencies to recognise the barriers and to implement appropriate strategies and policies that support people from CALD backgrounds to make complaints.

Barriers may include:

- fear of retribution
- concerns about confidentiality
- lack of knowledge of complaints systems
- language or literacy difficulties
- differing cultural norms
- distrust of government agencies
- fear that a service may be withdrawn

How you can support people from a CALD background to make complaints

Complaints are an important type of feedback that may assist in improving the delivery of services to the public. As a service provider to the CALD community, you can support your clients by reassuring them that it's OK to complain if they are dissatisfied with a service they receive.

If your client agrees, you can make the complaint on their behalf. A relative, friend, advocate or support person can also make the complaint on behalf of the complainant.

Steps for making a complaint

Step 1 We usually expect people to raise their concerns with the agency first, to allow them the chance to respond. Agencies can arrange for an interpreter as required.

Step 2 Tell the agency what action you want to happen for your complaint to be resolved.

Step 3 Record notes of phone calls, who you spoke to and the date.

Step 4 Ask the agency when you can expect a response from them.

Making a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint is handled by the service provider, you can contact us for advice or to lodge a complaint.

- We can arrange for an interpreter.
- We will assess your complaint.
- We may make further inquiries.
- We will allocate a case officer.
- We aim to respond to complaints within 10 working days

About the NSW Ombudsman

The NSW Ombudsman can handle complaints about most state and local government authorities and some community service providers.

Through complaint handling, review, monitoring, investigation, advice, training and community education, we seek to improve the administration and delivery of public and community services in NSW.

Our Jurisdiction

The Ombudsman can assist with complaints about a wide range of government and certain non-government agencies including, but not limited to:

- **Community Service Providers**
- **Revenue NSW**
- **Homes NSW,**
- **Local Councils**
- **Local Aboriginal Land Councils**
- **NSW Trustee and Guardian**
- **Transport for NSW**
- **Service NSW**
- **Department of Education**
- **NSW Public Schools**
- **TAFE NSW**
- **NSW State Universities**
- **Custodial Services (Corrective Services NSW, Justice Health and Youth Justice NSW).**

Please follow us:



Contact us for more information

Our business hours are:
Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm
(Our Complaints Line closes at 4pm)

If you wish to visit us, we prefer you make an appointment. Please call us first to ensure your complaint is within our jurisdiction and our staff are available to see you.

Level 24, 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Email info@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Web www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

General inquiries 02 9286 1000

Toll free (outside Sydney metro) 1800 451 524

National Relay Service 133 677

Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS): 131 450

Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS): 131 450

We can arrange an interpreter through TIS or you can contact TIS yourself before speaking to us.

ISBN: 978-1-925885-19-4

© State of New South Wales, May 2020

This publication is released under a Creative Commons license CC BY 4.0.

This fact sheet is one of a series produced by the NSW Ombudsman. Feedback is welcome.