

Supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to make complaints



Talk to us!

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- fear that a service may be withdrawn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:

- DCJ Housing (formerly FACS Housing)
- Community Service Providers
- Revenue NSW
- Roads and Maritime Services
- Land & Housing Corporation
- 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 Juvenile Justice NSW).

Our business hours are:
Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

If you wish to visit us, please call to make an appointment first.

Level 24, 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Please follow us:



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