

## The role of the Disability Services Commissioner

The Disability Services Commissioner (DSC) is established under the *Disability Act 2006* (the Act) and aims to improve services for people with a disability in Victoria. DSC works with service providers and all parties to try to resolve complaints about the provision of disability services. Complaints can lead to better services for everyone, and can be a way to sort out issues quickly. Every service must have a way for people who use the service to complain about things they are not happy about.

Under the Act, complaints about services to a person with a disability can be made directly to the service provider and to DSC. Where appropriate, the person making the complaint will be encouraged to try to resolve the complaint directly with the service provider before involving DSC.

When a complaint is made to DSC, our officers will handle the complaint on behalf of the Commissioner and will work with all parties to try to resolve the complaint.

### 1. Under the Act, what do service providers have to do?

Under the Act, service providers must:

- Have a complaints management system in place with a clear process to receive and resolve complaints about their services and supports. We can assist service providers to develop their complaints management systems and approaches to complaint resolution.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that no person is adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them, or on their behalf;

- Ensure that people with a disability who are using services know about the Disability Services Commissioner and our role in assisting with complaints resolution.
- Report every year to the Commissioner about the number, types and outcomes of complaints received, including how they were resolved.

DSC provides a web based annual complaints reporting tool to assist service providers to record and report their complaints data, and to enable trend analysis to inform service improvements.

### 2. How do service providers benefit from the work of the Commissioner?

The Commissioner's work assists service providers by:

Providing an independent complaints resolution process which focuses on ways to improve services for people with a disability;

- Sharing research and trends analysis in complaints about disability services and approaches to complaint resolution;
- Assisting in the development of complaints management policies and processes;
- Providing information and training about our office, and effective complaints resolution processes.

#### Accessible formats:

This document is available for downloading from our website at [www.odsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au) in PDF, RTF and audio. Please contact us if you require other accessible formats.

# Complaints can improve things!

A good practice guide and self-audit tool, along with a range of other resources have been developed to assist service providers in developing an effective person centred complaint management culture and approach to dealing with complaints.

For more information about how our office can assist your organisation contact us on 1300 728 187.

### 3. Who can make a complaint to the Disability Services Commissioner?

Any person can make a complaint to the Commissioner. This includes people with a disability, their families and carers, advocates or guardians, staff and any other person who wishes to make a complaint.

### 4. What types of issues can a complaint be about?

A complaint to the Commissioner can be about:

- the services a person receives or;
- how a service provider has handled a complaint;

The Commissioner can consider complaints about services for people with a disability that are provided by the Department of Human Services, registered disability service providers and funded or contracted services provided under the *Disability Act 2006*.

### 5. How do people make a complaint or contact the Disability Services Commissioner?

People can contact us first to discuss their concerns without making a complaint. We may be able to assist without the need for a complaint to the Commissioner. Service providers are also welcome to contact the office for advice about approaches to resolving complaints.

You can contact us by:



**Phoning** 1800 677 342 (free call from landlines) or TTY 1300 726 563  
Interpreters calls can be arranged.



**Writing**  
Level 30/570 Bourke St,  
Melbourne VIC 3000



**Faxing** 03 8608 5765



**Email** [complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au)



**Skype** Skype calls are available with DSC officers by appointment between the hours of 9am -5pm Monday to Friday. You can request a Skype call by phone, TTY, fax or email.



#### **National Relay Service users:**

Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired TTY users: 1800 555 677 then 1800 677 342; Speak and Listen users: 1800 555 727 then 1800 677 342.

For more information:

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)



#### **Completing a complaint form**

A form can be downloaded or completed on-line from our website [www.odsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au) or requested by phoning 1800 677 342.

The Act requires that complaints are confirmed in writing and that we have consent to pass on information about a complaint. We can assist people to complete a complaint form, and to help them to formulate a complaint if needed. We can do this by appointment or over the phone.

### 6. How can service providers get information in accessible formats or in other languages to share with people who receive services, staff and families?

Please contact us for information in accessible formats such as our brochure titled "It's OK to complain!". This brochure is available in plain English, large print, audio, Braille and community languages. Our website has information in Auslan, which is also available in a DVD