



Nationwide Health & Disability Adv
Ngā Kaitautoko

About us

The Advocacy Process

Step



Contact us

Step



Clarify issues

Step Step



Submit complaint



Agree resolution outcome

About the Advocacy Service

The Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service (the Advocacy Service) was formally established as a free and independent service for consumers of health and/or disability services in 1996.

We have 23 community-based offices throughout New Zealand. Each year the Advocacy Service expects to receive and close over 3,000 complaints, deliver more than 1,200 education sessions to consumers and providers, and respond to an estimated 18,000 enquiries.

For the period 01 July 2020 – 30 June 2021, we:

- Responded to 17,884 enquiries
- Closed 2675 complaints:
 - 81% were closed within 3 months
 - 82% were resolved or withdrawn by the consumer/complainant.

We have high resolution and satisfaction rates

The advocacy process is a very successful way to achieve early resolution and has advantages for both consumers and providers:

- Flexible and time effective.
- Gives consumers the opportunity to actively participate in finding a resolution.
- Gives providers the chance to explain their actions and work with consumers on the solution.
- Enables a better ongoing relationship between consumers and providers.

Generally, people who resolve their disputes through this process are more satisfied because they have more control over the process and the results.

- Our resolution rate is consistently between 90–94%.
- In 2016/17, 88% of consumers and 86% of providers who responded to satisfaction surveys said that they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Our advocates

The role of our advocates in complaint resolution is to assist consumers to identify what is needed to achieve resolution, and then to support them in their chosen actions. Advocates are not investigators or mediators, and they don't make decisions on whether there has been a breach of consumer rights.

Through their training, advocates learn how to achieve positive outcomes for consumers, and develop professional and respectful working relationships with providers and consumers of all backgrounds and abilities.

Advocates apply defined complaint resolution processes and use interactive adult education skills when promoting the rights set out in the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Code, including its application and impact, along with other relevant legislation and standards.

History of the Advocacy Service

In 1987, Judge Silvia Cartwright identified the need for an advocacy service during a major independent inquiry into the treatment of patients at an Auckland hospital. The [Cartwright Report](#), released on 5 August 1988, outlined the findings of the inquiry, and made key recommendations. These included how to address the need for a focus on consumer rights and the quality of services provided to consumers.

The inquiry report identified the need for widespread changes to the way patients were treated and services provided and emphasised the need for the services to have a patient- or consumer-centred approach.

Two key recommendations of the report were:

1. For a Health Commissioner to promote and uphold consumer rights
2. For independent advocates who would support consumers to ensure that their rights were upheld.

The initial focus on health was later extended to include the disability sector, and consumers using disability services.

Following the Cartwright Report, the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 was enacted to establish the role of an independent Health and Disability Commissioner and an independent advocacy service, and to provide for a code of consumer rights.

Remember, we are here to help.



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