

NSW Health Care Complaints Commission

Strategy 2017 - 2020

Mission

Protecting the health and safety of the NSW community through accessible and effective management of health care complaints and strong partnerships across the health sector.

Values

In all interactions with the public, health care providers and within the Commission we apply our core values and supporting behaviours:

- Public health and safety is paramount.
- We act impartially and independently in the public interest.
- We treat all people fairly and equitably.
- We strive for excellence and efficiency.
- We respect each other and collaborate with our partners.
- We are responsive and accountable.
- We foster open and honest communication and information sharing as a tool for improving health service delivery
- We develop our capability and use innovative processes to improve our service.

Our Strategic Context

- The NSW Health Care Complaints Commission has a unique and central part to play in maintaining the integrity of the health system.
- The independence of the Commission is central to its value and impact.
- NSW is recognised as being at the forefront of best practice, particularly in relation to: its powers and performance in investigations and prosecutions and co-regulation with the professional councils.
- Where things go wrong and there is a risk or experience of harm, the work of the Commission becomes highly visible.
- Quality and responsiveness in all elements of the Commission's operations is at the heart of maintaining effectiveness and reputation, notwithstanding the pressures and risks that arise from the increasing volume and complexity of complaints. In 2015-16, it received 6,075 complaints – a 101.0% increase over the last ten years (since 2005-06).
- Both the Commission and health service providers are looking to learn from complaints so that patterns and common issues can be identified. This will help improve the delivery of health services and ultimately, in the prevention of future complaints.
- The Commission has recently benefited from additional funding to assist in responding to growth in the volume and complexity of complaints. However, resourcing challenges will still be felt. Factors driving the growth in complaints are not within the Commission's control and the effect of previous years' growth continues to flow through to higher demand for investigation and legal action for a number of years.
- A focus on continuous improvement in business processes and building organisational capability will be central to ensuring that NSW has a complaints handling system that is modern, adaptable and responsive.

Elements

Strategic Priorities

E1 Excellent complaints management

We deliver complaints management processes that are responsive, impartial, effective and adaptable

- Strengthen our Inquiry Service so that people can be helped most effectively
- A commitment to early resolution and referring appropriate matters to the Resolution Service
- Redesign assessment processes to match the nature and complexity of complaint
- Strengthen assessment caseload management tools
- Reframe Commission communication so that it is in plain English and easily understood by complainants and providers
- Improve processes and systems for consultation and co-regulation with professional councils
- Deliver up to date and accessible monthly, quarterly and annual information on complaints management performance
- Improve our understanding of the experience of complainants and providers involved in complaints so that we can continuously improve the safety and delivery of health services

E2 Protecting the public

We investigate and prosecute serious complaints to protect public health and safety.

- Maintain best practice investigation techniques
- Continue to focus on delivering recommendations to health organisations to contribute to improvements
- Develop and resource a wider program of targeted audit activities to ensure implementation of recommendations for improvements in the delivery of health services
- Use public warnings to best effect
- Independent and timely determinations to prosecute
- Professional and competent prosecutions of serious complaints in the public interest

E3 Influencing and leading

We play a key role in maintaining the integrity of the NSW health system

- Utilise data to identify possible improvements to the quality of care and outcomes
- Partner with professional councils and boards, Clinical Excellence Commission, HETI and others to strengthen professional standards and practices
- Work with health service providers to improve local complaints management practices, based on a patient centred model
- Build community awareness of complaints management options and actions
- Identifying areas for legislative and administrative reform to enable the Commission to address risks to public health and safety

E4 Our People and Capability

We ensure that we have the skills and knowledge to meet current and emerging challenges and that our staff work together to deliver the best outcomes.

- Strengthen HR service including quality support from GovConnect and transparent and consistent organisational and recruitment practices.
- Develop and invest in a structured Commission wide training and development program, including leadership and management development
- Entrench opportunities for employees to identify and design potential improvements to processes, structures and management.
- Develop and maintain a culture of collaboration and engagement in all aspects of our work
- Introduce a formalised performance development program, including a rewards and recognition program.
- Pursue measures that promote connection and mobility across teams and Divisions

E5 Organisational Systems and Governance

We have the relevant tools, technology and processes in place to be efficient, effective and accountable

- Strengthen Executive leadership decision making and accountability
- Ensure that structures and resourcing support organisational priorities
- Strengthen office processes and records management to reflect best practice administration and to meet legislative obligations
- Review and improve performance reporting to the Minister and Joint Parliamentary Committee
- Improve the case management system to support decision making and to facilitate efficient collection of performance information
- Modernise our internal and external corporate communications, including reviewing and updating the Intranet and Website

Vision

To be influential and valued in ensuring the safe delivery of health services for the NSW public.