

External pathways to make a complaint or seek advice

Information for disability service workers

External pathways to make a complaint or seek advice

If disability service workers see, suspect or are told about a case of abuse, they must take immediate action. It's part of Victoria's *Code of conduct for disability service workers*. This includes reporting the abuse to their manager or supervisor. It may also be necessary to report the matter to an external authority. For instance, if a senior staff member is suspected of committing abuse, or if the senior staff member does not adequately respond to the incident, the worker should seek advice or make a complaint through an external pathway (see Table 1).

Table 1: External pathways to make a complaint or seek advice

Complaint/ advice pathway	When this pathway is appropriate	Contact information
Disability Services Commissioner (DSC)	The DSC can take complaints about the way a disability service provider is providing its services in Victoria. The DSC complaints service is independent and confidential and can respond to complaints or provide advice on further steps to assist the person.	1800 677 342 complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au Online complaints form
Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)	The OPA has a focus on improving organisational responses to violence and abuse, and on better understanding violence against women with a disability. The advice service can be contacted during business hours if a worker has questions about responding to an instance of abuse or suspected abuse.	1300 309 337
Health Complaints Commissioner	Complaints can be made to the Health Complaints Commissioner about health services that breach the <i>General services code of conduct</i> . The commissioner has powers to investigate a breach of the code and, if satisfied that a person has breached the code (or committed a prescribed offence), the commissioner may make an order to prevent a serious risk to the life, health, safety or welfare of a person or the public. An order may prohibit a person from continuing to providing a health service. Breaching an order is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.	1300 582 113
Victorian Ombudsman	The Victorian Ombudsman hears complaints about state government departments and local councils. The Ombudsman may be contacted if a worker is not confident about the timeliness, independence and integrity of a non-police investigation into an alleged case of abuse, neglect or violence.	1800 806 314 Online complaints form
Chief Psychiatrist	A complaint can be made to the Chief Psychiatrist if a person alleges violence, neglect or abuse in relation to a publicly funded clinical mental health service.	1300 767 299

Complaint/ advice pathway	When this pathway is appropriate	Contact information
Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)	If a sexual assault has occurred or is suspected, CASA can provide advice and support.	1800 806 292
1800 RESPECT – National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service	If sexual assault or family violence has occurred or is suspected, advice may be sought from the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service.	1800 737 732
Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre	If family violence has occurred or is suspected, support can be sought from Safe Steps. The centre provides crisis support services, safe house accommodation, refuge accommodation, safety planning, outreach services, information and advocacy.	1800 015 188

More information

To read the *Code of conduct for disability service workers* or find out more please see the [Code of Conduct for Disability Workers page](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-conduct-disability-workers) <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-conduct-disability-workers>> on the DHHS Providers website

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1800 783 783, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email disability services](mailto:disability.services@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <disability.services@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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Available from the [Code of Conduct for Disability workers](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-conduct-disability-workers) page <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-conduct-disability-workers>> on the DHHS Providers website.