

|  |
| --- |
| Early resolution transfers |
| Transferring complaints to the organisation you have complained about |

We may decide that a complaint could be resolved by transferring it to the organisation you have complained about.

This is one of the most common ways our office works with organisations to get quick and meaningful results for complainants.

## Complaints we often transfer

There are two main reasons we recommend transferring complaints.

**1. The organisation hasn’t had an opportunity to address the concerns.**

We like to give organisations the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised in a complaint before we take any further steps.

This process often leads to faster results as the organisation can address the complainant’s concerns directly.

Our investigations are comprehensive, which means it can take longer to gather and assess the relevant information.

**2. A matter is ongoing with the organisation.**

We generally do not consider complaints when the matter is still active. This is because the concerns raised may be addressed when the matter is finalised. An investigation by our office may also slow down the handling of a matter if the organisation has to respond to our investigation.

For example, we often recommend transferring complaints about delays associated with the registration of health practitioners. For complaints like these, we have found that people often receive an update, and sometimes the registration process is sped up, by transferring the complaint to Ahpra. You can read Ahpra’s [Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Complaints.aspx) on its website: <www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Complaints.aspx>.

## The transfer process

There are four main steps in the transfer process.

### Step 1: transferring the complaint

We contact the complainant to explain why we believe a transfer is the best way to address their concerns quickly and effectively. We then request their consent (either written or over the phone) to transfer the complaint.

If the complainant provides consent, we contact the organisation to transfer the complaint. We tell the organisation what the complainant has told us about their complaint and share the complainant’s contact information. The complaint remains open with our office while the organisation responds to it.

The organisation has two business days after the date it receives the complaint from our office to acknowledge receipt. The organisation is required to respond in full to the complaint within 20 business days.

### Step 2: assessing the organisation’s response

Once the complainant receives a response, we assess the response to ensure it is fair and reasonable. We will ask for the complainant’s perspective on the response before we make a decision.

### Step 3: deciding how to resolve the complaint

We share our assessment of the organisation’s response with the complainant.

We have found that most complaints are resolved through this process. However, if our office is not satisfied with the organisation’s response, we may decide to:

* make preliminary inquiries to clarify or find out more information
* start an investigation.

For more information about our investigation process, visit [our website](http://www.nhpo.gov.au/) <www.nhpo.gov.au>.

## Frequently asked questions

### What if I am not happy with the response?

Once we receive the organisation’s response, we assess it to ensure it is fair and reasonable. We also ask the complainant if they are satisfied with the response.

Following this, we may decide to open an investigation. It can take at least three months and up to twelve months to reach an outcome. We may also decide to make further inquiries or take no further action if we find the response fair and reasonable.

### What if I’m not happy with your office’s response?

We offer an internal review of decisions made by our office throughout the complaint process. Applications for an internal review must:

* clearly explain why the complainant is dissatisfied with our decision or the actions we have taken
* provide new information that is relevant to the complaint.

An internal review application is managed by a staff member who has not been previously involved in the handling of the matter.

To receive this publication in an accessible format, please phone 1300 795 265, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email complaints@nhpo.gov.au.

Authorised and published by the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

© National Health Practitioner Ombudsman, January 2023.