



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in March 2024

Monthly approaches overview

1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024

Please note: our data is subject to change due to ongoing investigations and quality assurance activities. If you have a question about our data, please contact us on 1300 795 265 or by email via complaints@nhpo.gov.au.

128

approaches
received



Down from 199 in
March 2023



39

Ombudsman
complaints received



Down from 58 in
March 2023



2

FOI matters
received



Up from 1 in
March 2023



0

privacy
complaints received



Down from 1 in
March 2023



86

enquiries
received



Down from 139 in
March 2023



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 33
individuals (Down from
47 in March 2023)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



1

notifiable data
breach assessed
(Up from 0 in
March 2023)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

7

early resolution
transfers made



Down from 24 in
March 2023



11

preliminary
inquiries made



Up from 9 in
March 2023



2

investigations
launched



Up from 1
in March 2023



56

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Down from 66 in March 2023

Stage complaint was finalised

35

assessment

11

early resolution
transfer

10

preliminary
inquiry

0

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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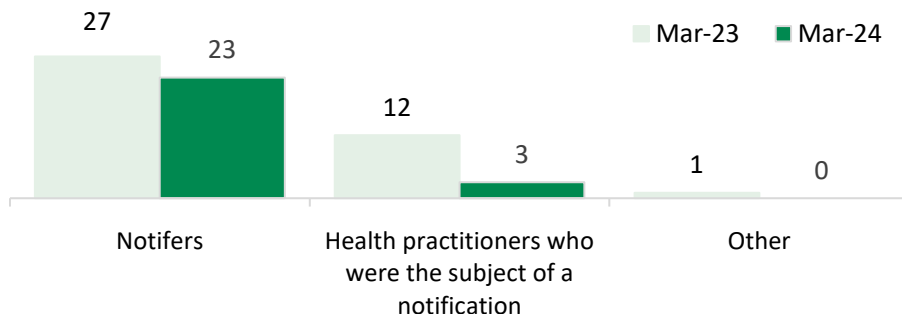
26

notification-related complaints received

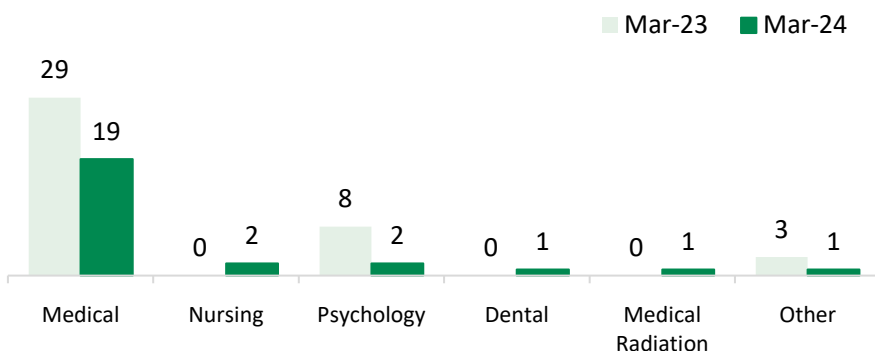


Down from 40 in March 2023

Who made notification-related complaints



Professions notification-related complaints were about



Type of notifications action that most frequently drove notification-related complaints

1. No further action taken at the assessment stage
2. No further action taken at an unknown stage
3. Immediate action taken while the notification is investigated
4. Action taken at the investigation stage
5. Notification is active

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The matter complained about was still active and the organisation should be given an opportunity to finalise it
4. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
5. The concerns raised would be more appropriately handled by a Court or Tribunal

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024



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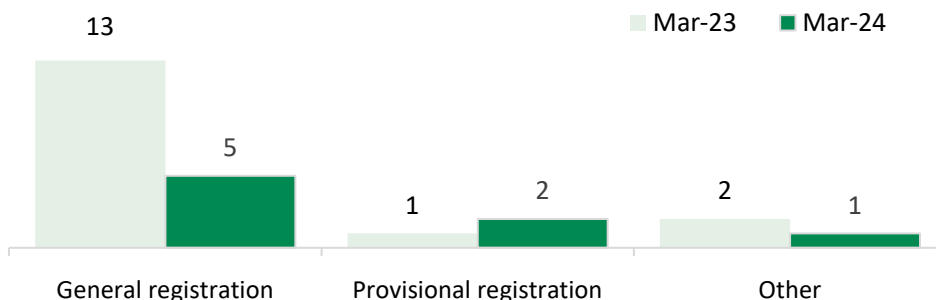
8

registration-related
complaints received

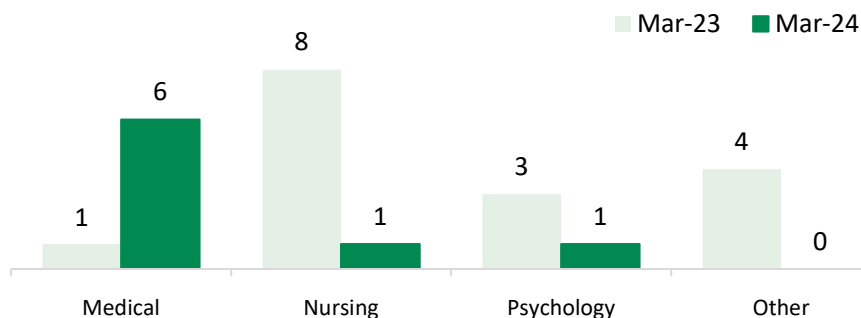


Down from 16 in March 2023

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Handling of an application for endorsement of registration
2. Member of the public cannot access their preferred practitioner due to a registration issue
3. Processing of a new application for registration
4. Monitoring of compliance with restrictions on a practitioner's registration
5. Review of restrictions on a practitioner's registration

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

7 assessment 1 early resolution transfer
1 preliminary inquiry 0 investigation

Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
4. The organisation is actively considering a complaint about the same issue already
5. The complainant was not directly impacted by the concerns raised

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Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

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3

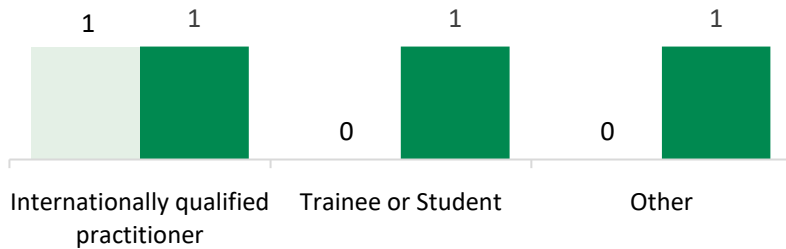
accreditation-related
complaints received



Up from 1 in March 2023

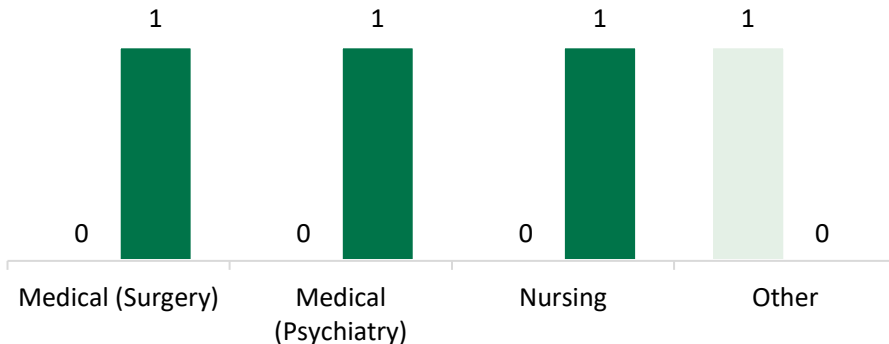
Who made accreditation-related complaints

■ Mar-23 ■ Mar-24



Professions and specialisations that accreditation-related complaints were about

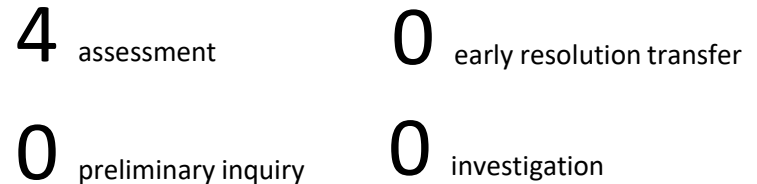
■ Mar-23 ■ Mar-24



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Concern that a program of study is inadequate
2. Delivery of a specialist medical training program
3. Concern about a merits review process

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. Our office is unable to investigate without compromising the complainant's request to remain confidential
2. The complainant has not yet raised their concerns with the organisation they are complaining about
3. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision
4. An investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
5. Our office is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue

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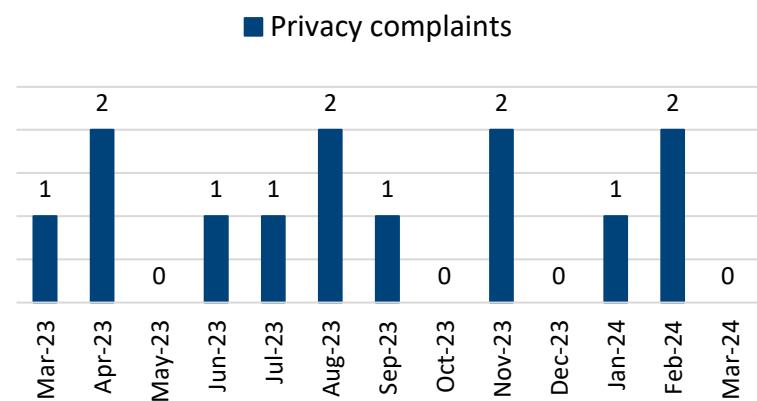
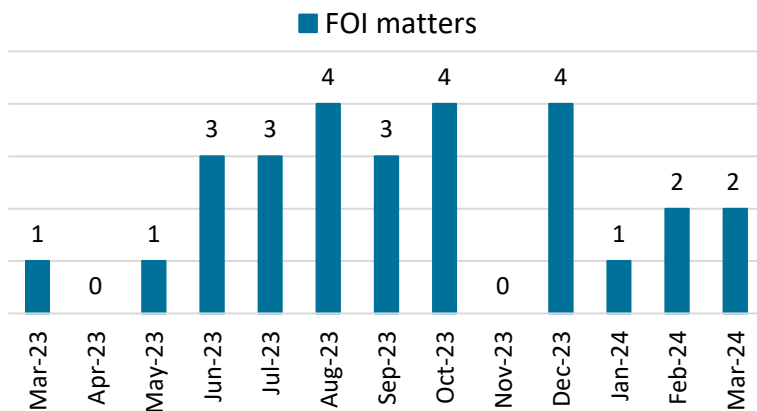
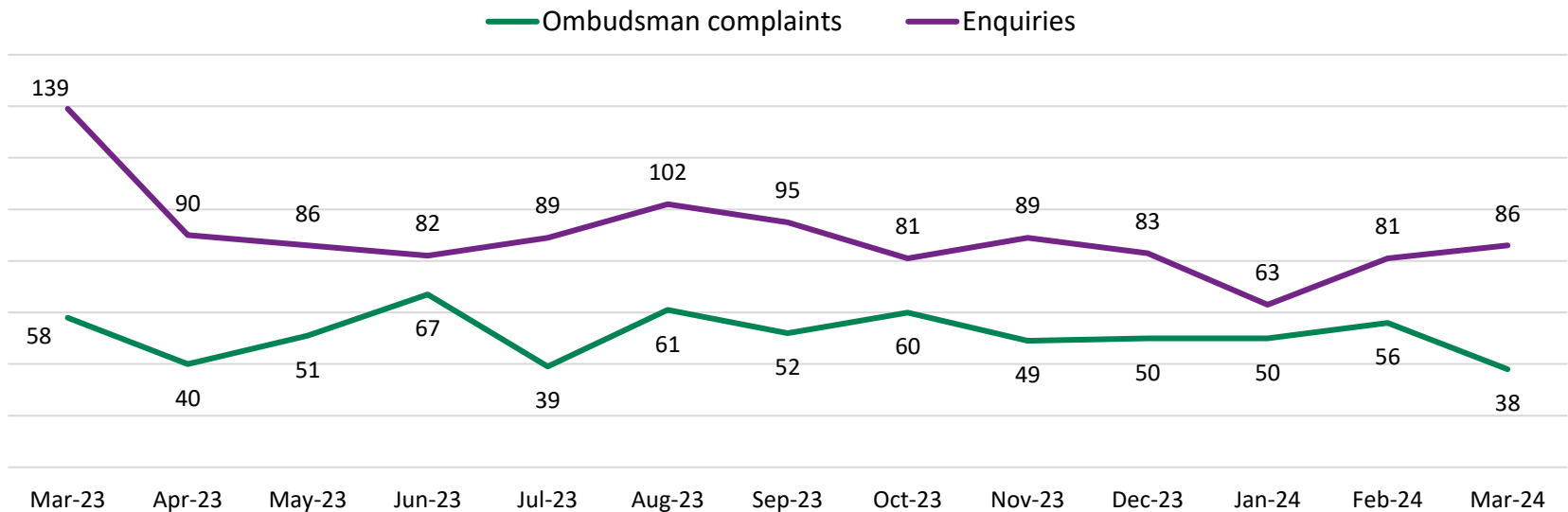
National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024

Approach trends

1 March 2023 to 31 March 2024



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024

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Types of complaints received

293 ↓ Down from 324 in the same period last financial year
notification

83 ↓ Down from 121 in the same period last financial year
registration

39 accreditation
40 Other types

Who made complaints

261 health practitioners
194 Non-practitioners

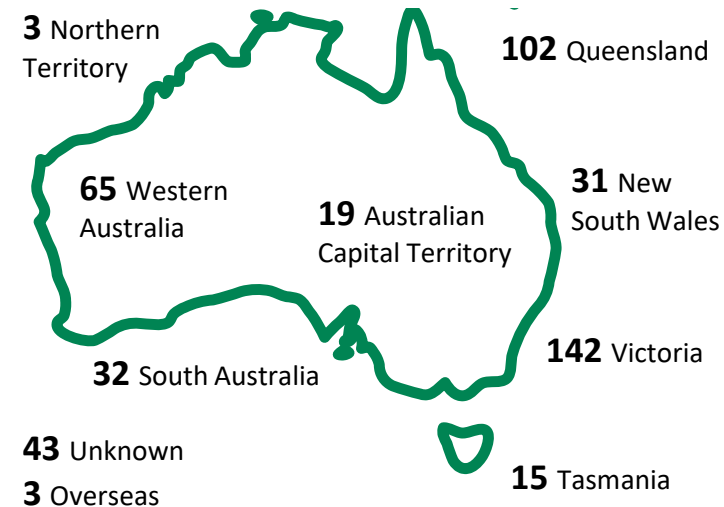
↓ Down from 286 in the same period last financial year

↓ Down from 219 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

285 medical ↑ Up from 279 in the same period last financial year
63 nursing ↓ Down from 66 in the same period last financial year
36 psychology ↓ Down from 61 in the same period last financial year

Location the complaints were made from



Most common notification-related issues that drove complaints

1. Notifier believes a decision to take no further action at the assessment stage was unfair or unreasonable
2. Notifier believes a decision to take no further action at the assessment stage was made without all relevant information being considered
3. Notifier believes inadequate reasons have been given for a decision to take no further action at the assessment stage

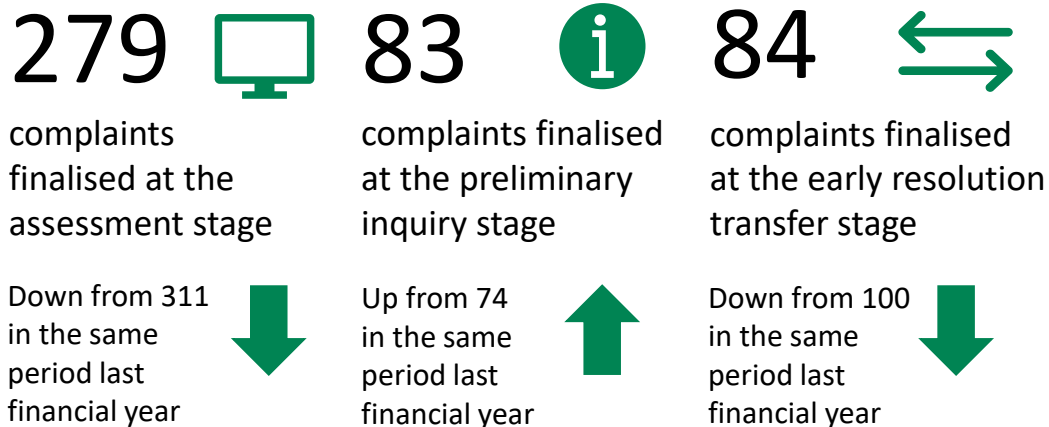
Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for satisfying the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the fees they have been charged for registration are unfair or unreasonable
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard has resulted in a decision that is unfair or unreasonable

Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2024

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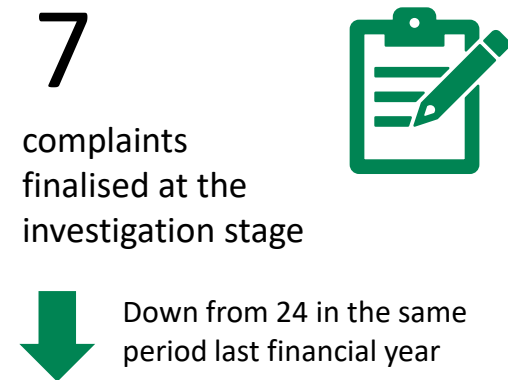
Early resolution mechanisms



Most common outcomes at early resolution stages (assessment, preliminary inquiry and early resolution transfer)

1. An investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The complainant did not provide information our office had requested
4. The underlying matter complained about remains active and the organisation should be given an opportunity to finalise it
5. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision

Investigations



Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to the organisation being complained about
2. We are monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
3. An apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation being complained about
4. We provided formal comments or suggestions to the organisation being complained about
5. We provided a further explanation to the complainant

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 128 approaches in March 2024, which represents a considerable reduction in approaches from March 2023 (199). This reduction can be attributed to both a drop in complaints to the Ombudsman (39, down from 58) and fewer enquiries about matters that we cannot directly assist with (86, down from 139). The causes of this reduction in approaches is unclear, but may be related to Easter falling in March this year.

The reduction in complaints to the Ombudsman during March 2024 was seen across both notification-related complaints (26, down from 40) and registration-related complaints (eight, down from 16). Notification-related complaints concerning the medical profession decreased from 29 to 19 complaints, and registration-related concerns about the nursing profession reduced from eight to only one complaint. Concerns relating to the psychology profession reduced across both notification-related matters (two, down from eight) and registration-related matters (one, down from three).

Despite the overall reduction in complaints to the Ombudsman, the trends in notification-related complaints remained consistent. Notification-related complaints continued to be made by more notifiers than health practitioners who have been notified about. Conversely, trends relating to registration matters were noticeably different this month because we received fewer complaints related to the assessment of English language skills and international qualifications.

My office finalised 56 complaints to the Ombudsman during March 2024 (down from 66 in March 2023). While this represents fewer case closures than in March 2023, it is a significant increase from February 2024 (39). All Ombudsman complaints finalised in March 2024 were concluded without a formal investigation being required.

Across active Ombudsman complaints, we initiated two new investigations, facilitated seven early resolution transfers and commenced preliminary inquiries 11 times in March 2024.