

Thursday, 31 October 2019

Increased conciliation of complaints

An increase in the number of complaints moved into conciliation highlights the 2018-19 Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) [Annual Report](#).

Conciliation uses staff of the HCSCC as an impartial third party to help resolve complaints in a confidential environment.

HCSCC Associate Professor Grant Davies said conciliation was an important aspect of complaint resolution.

“We have a renewed focus on this important process,” Assoc. Prof. Davies explained.

“Conciliation enables listening, tests assumptions, acknowledges the complex emotions and nature of complaints and creates a safe space for parties to explore the impact of events.

“Importantly, it acknowledges different views even if parties do not agree and offers the potential for a better outcome for consumers and service providers alike.”

The Office of the HCSCC experienced another increase in overall contacts in 2018-19 with a 6.36 per cent increase in health contacts.

Assoc. Prof. Davies added that whilst complaint numbers were slightly lower, enquiry figures had increased.

“This means the Office of the HCSCC is providing more advice and guidance to people getting in touch with us and that could be facilitating direct resolution with the service provider,” he said.

“A complainant and a service provider communicating directly is a vital part of the process and helps achieve a viable outcome for the parties.

“Community service contacts decreased in 2018-19. This is related to the transfer of disability services complaints to the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission and we anticipate this figure to further reduce over time.”

Other key statistics from the Annual Report, which was tabled today in South Australia’s Parliament, include:

- 1982 contacts were closed within 21 days;
- 49 per cent of health complaints were about treatment received;
- One successful prosecution of an unregistered health practitioner.

The HCSCC is also delighted to release a [Companion Document](#) that supplements the Annual Report.

Background

The HCSCC defines a contact as either an enquiry, complaint or an own motion investigation. It can be in the form of (but not limited to) a telephone call, email, online form or letter.