
HUMAN RIGHTS AUTHORITY

INFORMATION FOR COMPLAINANTS

Persons who make complaints to the Human Rights Authority (HRA) about the service received from a facility or agency often wonder just what they can expect from the Authority's investigation. This information is designed to address that concern.

The Authority is charged with investigating whether the rights of recipients have been violated. The rights we address are those protected by statutes such as the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code and the Nursing Home Care Act; other statutes and regulations may also be used. Because these statutes govern our work as well as the care of recipients, we can only find violations where a right is protected by statute. Much as we might dislike some incident or event involving a recipient, there is little that the HRA can do if no right was violated.

Although the complaint we received concerns what happened to you or to another individual, in investigating the complaint, we are also concerned that it may represent a problem that affects other recipients. In that sense, we will focus on general practices as they affect a number of recipients as well as you or any other individual.

We want you to understand that, often, it is future recipients who benefit from our investigations as much as or more than you or the person named in the complaint. Often not much can be done about what has already occurred, but the HRA can impact practices so that this problem does not happen to someone else. Many times our investigations have brought about that kind of change in the way facilities serve people; those results make our work worthwhile.

In summary, the Authority is statutorily empowered to review and accept complaints of rights violations for investigation. The HRA then conducts its investigation as it deems fit. Please note that the Authority does not resolve disputes between the complainant and the service provider. Instead, the HRA investigates rights violations and negotiates with service providers for improved rights protections. The Authority's responsibility to you as the complainant is to maintain your confidentiality, obtain from you a signed release of information when appropriate, periodically advise you of the status of the investigation and inform you of the case outcome and case closure.

Thank you for bringing this complaint to our attention. We will do a thorough investigation and try to conclude the case in a timely manner.