



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in January 2024

Monthly approaches overview

1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

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.

115

approaches
received



Down from 140 in
January 2023



50

Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 44 in
January 2023



1

FOI matter
received



Down from 2 in
January 2023



1

privacy
complaint received



Up from 0 in
January 2023



63

enquiries
received



Down from 93 in
January 2023



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 39
individuals (Down from
42 in January 2023)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



0

notifiable data
breaches assessed
(Down from 1 in
January 2023)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

18

early resolution
transfers made



Up from 6 in
January 2023



10

preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 14 in
January 2023



2

investigations
launched



Up from 0
in January 2023



50

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Up from 46 in January 2023

Stage complaint was finalised

32

assessment

12

early resolution
transfer

6

preliminary
inquiry

0

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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39

notification-related complaints received

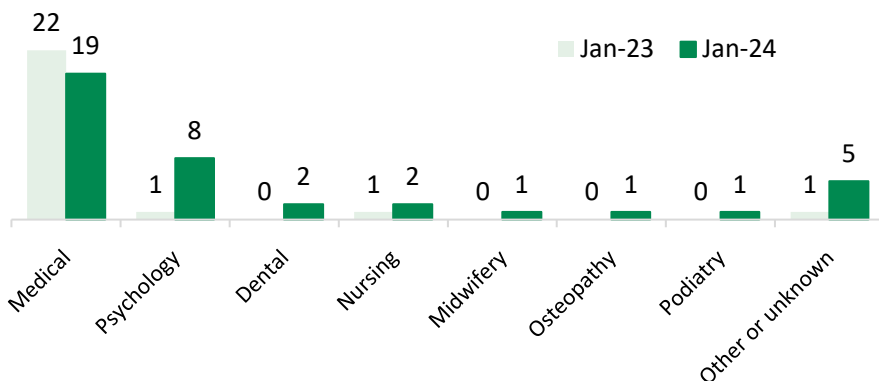


Up from 25 in January 2023

Who made notification-related complaints



Professions notification-related complaints were about



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

1. Notification remains active
2. No further action taken at the assessment stage
3. Action taken at the investigation stage
4. Outcome and stage of notification unknown
5. Action taken to refer practitioner to relevant tribunal

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
3. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
4. The underlying matter complained about remains active
5. Matter declined as it related to the merits of the organisation's decision

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024

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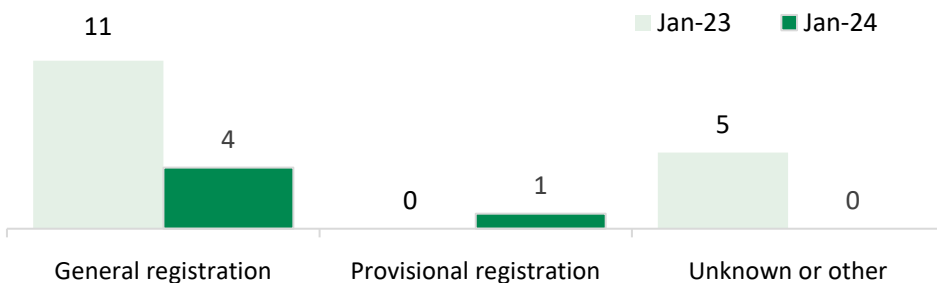
5

registration-related
complaints received

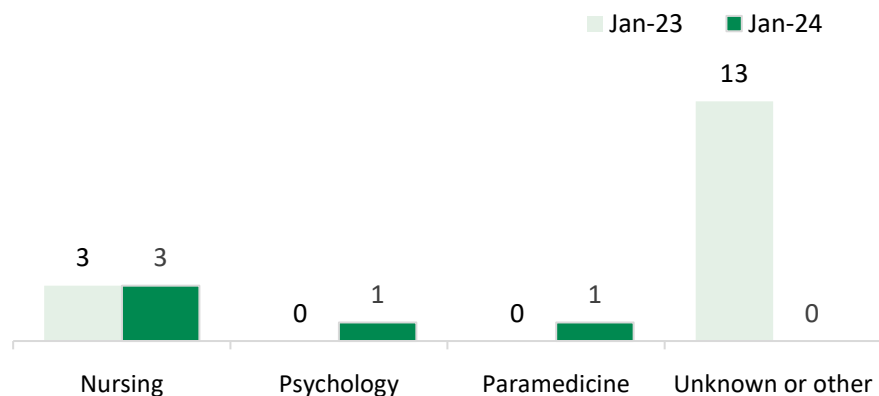


Down from 16 in January 2023

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Application of the Professional Indemnity Insurance Registration Standard
2. Handling of a practitioner's application for endorsement
3. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
4. Fees charged for registration
5. Processing of a new application for registration

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. Our office is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
5. The underlying matter complained about remains active

Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

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5

accreditation-related
complaints received

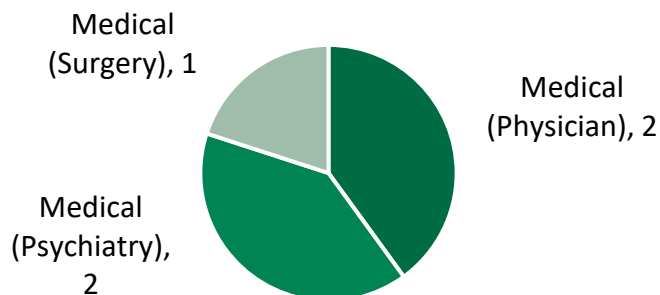


Up from 2 in January 2023*

Who made accreditation-related complaints



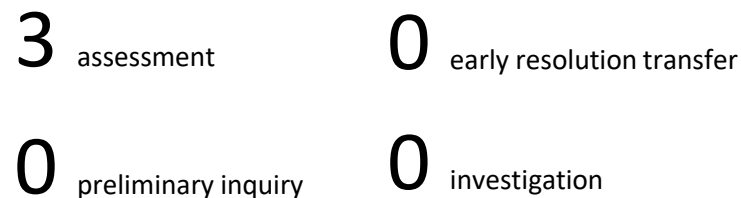
Professions and specialisations that accreditation-related complaints were about



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Delivery of a training program
2. Removal of a trainee from a training program
3. Merits review processes
4. Delivery of an examination
5. Access to examination results

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The complainant had not yet made a complaint to the organisation they raised concerns about
2. Matter was withdrawn by the complainant
3. The underlying matter complained about remains active

* The NHPO's expanded jurisdiction to consider accreditation-related complaints commenced on 27 January 2023. Additional comparative data will be provided in this report from February 2024.



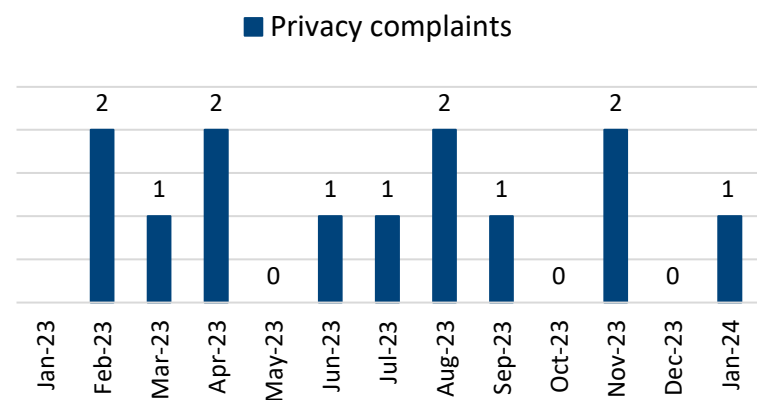
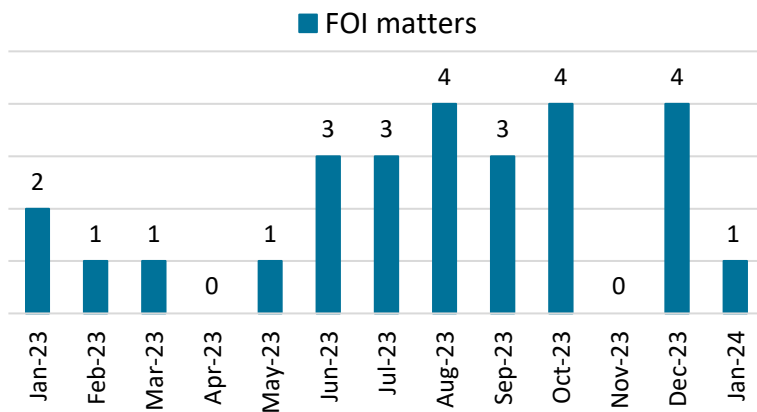
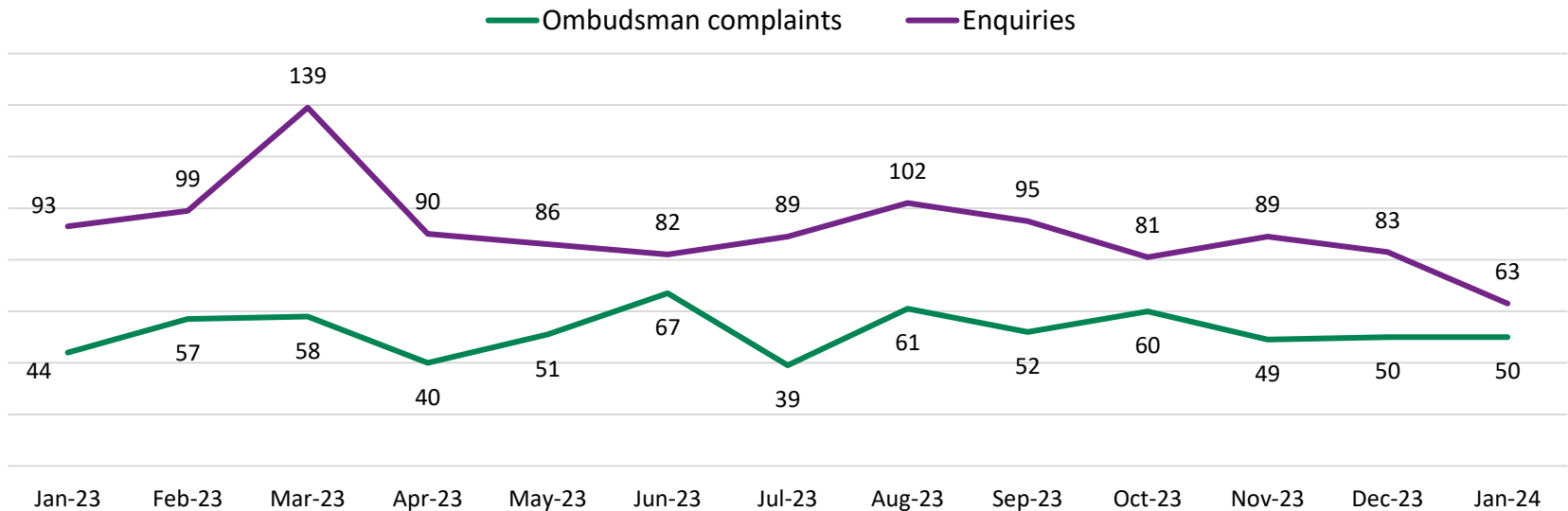
National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

1 July 2023 to 31 January 2024

Approach trends


1 July 2023 to 31 January 2024




Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 31 January 2024

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Types of complaints received


236 notification  Down from 248 in the same period last financial year


60 registration  Down from 94 in the same period last financial year

32 accreditation **33** Other types




Who made complaints




200 health practitioners **161** Non-practitioners

 Down from 215 in the same period last financial year

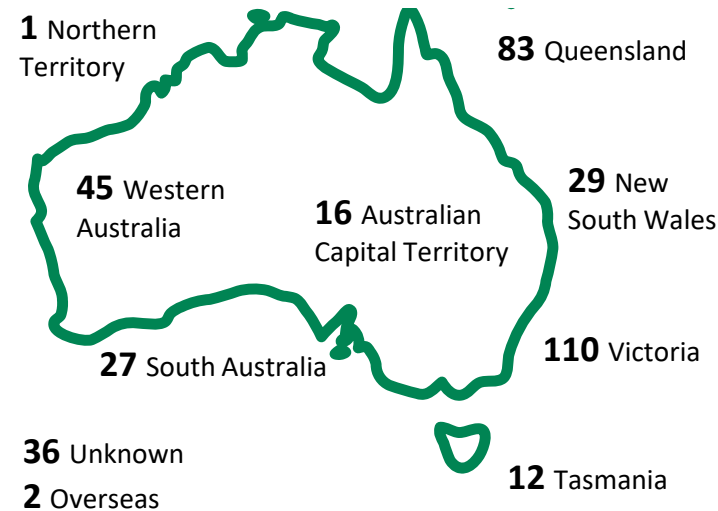
 Down from 175 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

 **225** medical  **44** nursing  **30** psychology

 Up from 221 in the same period last financial year  Down from 53 in the same period last financial year  Down from 39 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 evidence being considered
3. Notifier believes inadequate steps were taken before a decision to take no further action was made at the assessment stage

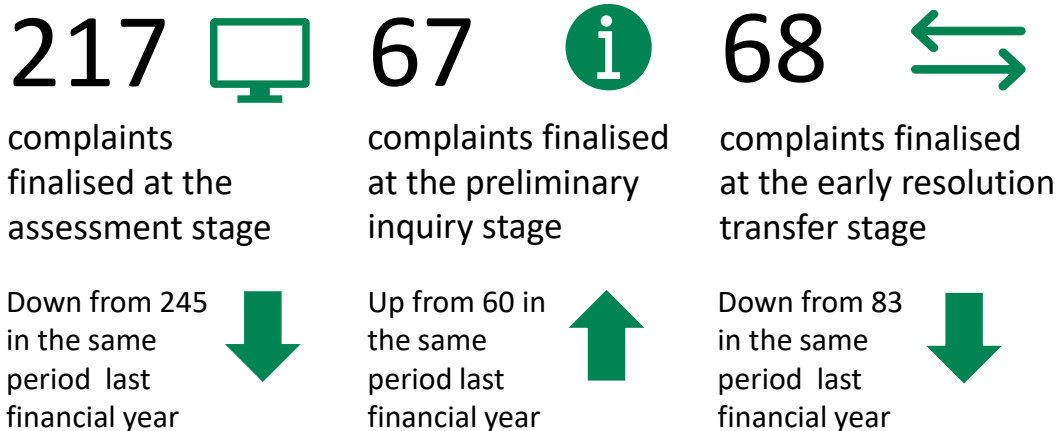
Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the fees they have been charged for registration are unfair or unreasonable
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for satisfying the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes 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 2022 to 31 January 2024

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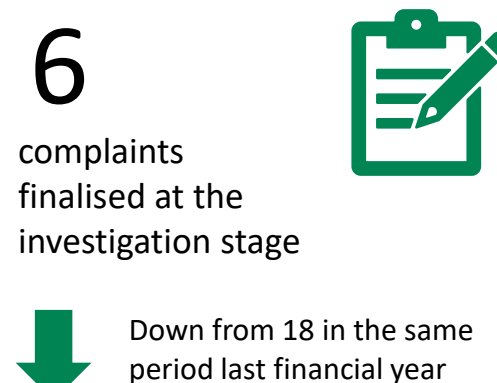
Early resolution mechanisms



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

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 information our office had requested
4. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision
5. The underlying matter complained about remains active

Investigations



Most common investigation outcomes

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

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 115 approaches during January 2024. This represents a reduction in approaches from both December 2023 (137) and January 2023 (140). This was mostly due to a reduction in the number of enquiries being made. In January 2024 we received 63 enquiries, compared with 83 in January 2023 and 93 in February 2023. 'Enquiries' are generally matters that fall outside of my office's jurisdiction. This is often because people are seeking to make a complaint about a health practitioner or health service (rather than about an organisation we oversight).

We recorded 50 complaints to the Ombudsman during January 2024. This is consistent with what we received in December 2023 (50) but is higher than what was recorded in January 2023 (44). Consistent with past trends, most complaints to the Ombudsman related to the handling of a notification (39). Notification-related complaints from both notifiers (23, up from 16) and practitioners (12, up from 6) are higher than they were a year ago. Concerns about the handling of notifications related to medical practitioners drove the most complaints (19). Notification-related complaints related to the psychology profession increased markedly (8, up from 1), however most of these complaints were raised by the same individual.

My office received 5 registration-related complaints in January 2024. While the volume of these types of complaints is small, it is notable that we saw a reduction in registration-related concerns related to the medical profession (0 complaints, down from 5 in January 2023). We noted an increase in concerns related to professional indemnity insurance and the fairness of registration fees.

This month marks 12-months since the powers of my office were expanded to consider accreditation-related complaints. The number of accreditation-related complaints we recorded this month (5) is the same as the number of registration-related complaints we received. I expect we will see this trend continue. It has been interesting to see, however, how registration and accreditation-related issues inter-relate and overlap in the complaints we have received to date.

My office initiated 18 new early resolution transfers for complaints to the Ombudsman in January 2024 (12 more than in January 2023). We also commenced preliminary inquiries 10 times (4 fewer than January 2023). We finalised 18 matters using these informal resolution mechanisms and commenced 2 new investigations. We successfully finalised 32 complaints to the Ombudsman at the assessment stage (representing 64 per cent of all complaints we closed).