



RACGP
Royal Australian College
of General Practitioners

Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention facilities

Patient feedback

The *Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention facilities* (2nd edition) (IDF Standards) encourage quality improvement and enable health services to identify opportunities to make changes that will improve patient safety and care.

This document has been written for health service providers at Australian immigration detention facilities and is intended to accompany the IDF Standards and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) *Patient feedback guide*.

Why collect patient feedback?

Patient feedback focuses on the whole-person experience when receiving care from a health service. It is as important in an immigration detention facility health service as it is in any other healthcare setting. Patient feedback focuses on the whole-person experience, and having a patient feedback process is different to a complaints mechanism (see [Difference between patient feedback and your complaints mechanism](#)).

Patient feedback can be used to:

- improve the quality of healthcare provided by your health service
- improve other aspects of your health service (eg access and communication)
- provide constructive feedback to your staff
- demonstrate that you value your patients' views and needs.

Collecting and responding to feedback means that your patients are more likely to have positive experiences at your health service, which in turn leads to better outcomes for them (eg they are more likely to follow the advice and treatment provided).

Patient feedback highlights the importance of effective health service delivery. Collecting and responding to feedback from patients who receive care at immigration detention facility health services provides a sense of ownership for individuals in detention and a mechanism to contribute to the quality of healthcare they receive.

Patient feedback indicators in the IDF Standards

Patient feedback is addressed in Criterion Q11.2 of the IDF Standards.

Indicators

Q11.2▶ A Our health service collects feedback from patients, carers and other relevant parties in accordance with the RACGP *Patient feedback guide*.

Q11.2▶ B Our health service analyses, considers and responds to feedback.

Q11.2▶ C Our health service informs patients, carers and other relevant parties about how we have responded to feedback and used feedback to improve quality.

How to meet the patient feedback requirements of the IDF Standards

The explanatory notes of Criterion Q1.2 detail how a health service can meet this criterion.

The RACGP developed the *Patient feedback guide* principally for general practice. However, you can broadly apply the *Patient feedback guide* when collecting patient feedback by adopting a common-sense approach to its application in the immigration detention setting.

This document provides information to contextualise some details in the *Patient feedback guide* for this setting.

Adapting the *Patient feedback guide* for immigration detention facility health services

To translate and implement the advice of the *Patient feedback guide* in immigration detention facility health services, the following notes provide additional direction when used in this setting.

General notes for health services in immigration detention facilities using the *Patient feedback guide*

- Where the *Patient feedback guide* refers to general practitioners (GP), your health service can interchange this with 'a member of the clinical team'.
- References to home visits can be interpreted as 'visits to living quarters'.
- The *Patient feedback guide* makes frequent reference to the 'communication and interpersonal skills of clinical and administrative staff'. Your health service could consider the role of non-health service staff who support the health service operation (eg security staff who accompany individuals to the health service), and whether feedback related to those staff is suitable.
- You could invite participation in patient feedback methods by advertising throughout your facility that individuals are welcome to provide feedback on the health service.

References in the *Patient feedback guide* to the following are **not applicable** for health services in immigration detention facilities:

- phone and SMS contact
- cost of services
- online versions of a questionnaire (in regard to questionnaires being sent to patients to complete)
- benchmarking and commercially available patient feedback tools.

Methods for collecting patient feedback at your health service

As per Criterion Q1.2 of the IDF Standards, your health service must collect patient feedback using a method outlined in the *Patient feedback guide*. The primary methods of collecting feedback are questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. Refer to Section 2 of the *Patient feedback guide*.

In the immigration detention setting, methods that might be useful for feedback collection include:

- language-specific focus groups
- distribution of translated questionnaires (and non-verbal resources where needed) to all individuals in detention (noting the importance of obtaining feedback from those who have not attended the health service recently, or at all, and why they have not)
- multilingual questions or surveys using electronic tablets in the waiting room
- other patient feedback methods, as outlined in Section 2 of the *Patient feedback guide*.

Questionnaires

If using a questionnaire to collect patient feedback, the *Patient feedback guide* states that 377 is the ideal number of questionnaires to achieve statistically valid results on patient feedback data. The RACGP maintains that a greater number of surveyed patients will provide more effective feedback for the health service; however, given that the number of individuals in detention fluctuates, and that in some facilities this number exceeds the maximum number of individuals that are or can be detained in the facility, a number this high might be unattainable.

In order for your service to determine what number of patient surveys it needs within an accreditation cycle, you can access the [Raosoft Sample size calculator](#). This tool allows your service to select a sample size, based on your facility's population, and see what margin of error exists. Your service should not accept a margin of error greater than 5%.

Appendix 1 includes a modified questionnaire suitable for health services in immigration detention facilities.

Focus groups

Focus groups are important for providing patients an opportunity to speak about issues that are important to them.

The *Patient feedback guide* suggests that you limit focus groups to 5–10 participants to optimise participation and avoid receiving either too little or too much feedback. The *Patient feedback guide* also states that focus groups must consist of patients who regularly see a particular clinical staff member (refer to Section 4: Conducting focus groups).

While these factors are optimal for an effective focus group, the patient population size in an immigration detention facility might not allow for groups this size, or for all attendees to be the patient of the same practitioner. Therefore, while a focus group should aim for the target requirements of the *Patient feedback guide*, a group of fewer patients (eg three patients) will still provide the service with valuable feedback that it can use to improve care.

Because individuals in detention might be living together or in close proximity, there is a risk that the information provided in a focus group is identifiable, which might lead to a breach in confidentiality. Staff facilitating a focus group must be aware of this risk so that appropriate groups are formed and questions are asked.

When conducting a focus group, it is essential that you have addressed all [six of the patient feedback themes](#) on page 5 of the *Patient feedback guide*. You could adapt the questionnaire provided in **Appendix 1**, which covers all of these themes, for your focus group.

Interviews

Your service might choose to interview patients for feedback. The *Patient feedback guide* provides advice on this method in Section 5: Conducting interviews.

Identification of cultural and linguistic diversity

The identification of cultural and linguistic diversity through patient feedback is essential to enable effective care provision, especially given the cultural diversity inherent to populations within immigration detention facilities. Collecting information about a patient's cultural heritage will help your health service provide the most appropriate care. The cultural background of a patient can be an important indicator of clinical risk factors and can help practitioners to provide relevant care. Asking for this demographic detail through your patient feedback process allows you to see whether particular themes affect patients of some cultural backgrounds more than others within your health services' patient community.

Ensuring that patients understand patient feedback

Your patients' right to understand any information provided to them by your health service extends to understanding patient feedback methods. Your health service has a professional obligation to communicate effectively and to understand your patients' concerns. When delivering information to, and collecting feedback from, a patient, consider the patient's level of health literacy, and therefore their ability to understand the information and to respond effectively. Assessing the health literacy of patients and then providing them with information based on that assessment can help to increase a patient's awareness and understanding of patient feedback. For more information about health literacy and building a patient's health literacy, refer to Criterion C1.3: Informed patient decisions in the IDF Standards.

Your health service needs to ensure that patient feedback resources (eg invitation to provide feedback and patient feedback questionnaire) are culturally appropriate and translated. This might be a questionnaire translated in the patient's

preferred language or having an interpreter available during a focus group or interview.

You must only collect patient feedback responses if the patient has been informed of all aspects of the activity, including reason, duration, topics to be discussed, how confidentiality will be maintained, who will be present and possible compensation, and ensure that the patient has given their consent. Refer to the ethical considerations in Section 1 of the *Patient feedback guide* for more information.

You must advise patients who provide feedback to your health service that identifiable information will not be shared with the Department of Home Affairs or any non-health service personnel (including security staff).

Ensuring a representative sample

Patients must be randomly selected in order to achieve a representative sample (refer to methods for ensuring you achieve a representative sample in Section 1 of the *Patient feedback guide*). To achieve a representative sample from your health service, when selecting patients to provide feedback, consider:

- different age groups
- genders
- ethnicities
- the average length of time in detention
- reasons for detention (eg refused or cancelled visa, as opposed to boat arrival).

Difference between patient feedback and your complaints mechanism

While complaints might be a part of patient feedback, they are of no more importance to patient feedback than other aspects of the patient experience. While a patient might complain through

your patient feedback method, the focus of the feedback mechanism should be much broader (see the patient feedback themes and questions in Section 1 of the *Patient feedback guide* and **Appendix 1** for an idea of how broad patient feedback can be).

Complaints resolution forms part of your health service's business operation systems and is addressed in Indicator C3.1 ► D Our health service has a complaints resolution process in the IDF Standards . This is independent of patient feedback for quality improvement.

Appendix 1: RACGP Patient feedback questionnaire for health services in immigration detention facilities

Using the questionnaire

The questionnaire provided in this appendix can be used by health services in Australian immigration detention facilities to collect patient feedback, as required in Criterion Q11.2 of the *Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention facilities* (2nd edition).

You must collect:

- feedback based on six themes (as outlined throughout the questionnaire below) that address different aspects of patients' experiences at your practice
- the demographics of the patients.

You are not required to use all of the questions suggested in the questionnaire, provided you meet the minimum requirement of three topics under each patient feedback theme.

Disclaimer

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular patients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. It is not substitute for individual inquiry. Compliance with any recommendations does not guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients. The RACGP and its employees and agents have no liability (including for negligence) to any users of the information contained in this publication.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

Questionnaire

Access and availability

Q1. Making an appointment and waiting to see a clinician at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Seeing the clinician of your choice							
Making an appointment to see a clinician							
Getting an appointment for a time that suited you							
The time you had to wait to get this appointment (before getting to the health service)							
The time you had to wait after you arrived at the health service							
Getting reminders for your appointment							
The comfort of the waiting room							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about making an appointment and waiting to see a clinician?							

Communication and interpersonal skills of administrative staff

Q2. Your experience with reception staff at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Were welcoming upon your arrival							
Were professional in dealing with you							
Considered your needs when making an appointment							
Let you know about any delays while you were waiting							
Were courteous and polite							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about your experience with reception staff at your last visit?							

Communication and interpersonal skills of clinical staff

Q3. Your experience of the interpersonal skills of the clinician at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Treated you with respect							
Understood your personal circumstances							
Had enough time to talk about the things that were important for you							
Cared about you as a person							
Made you feel comfortable							
Showed sensitivity to your concerns							
Told you all you wanted to know about your condition							
Let you talk about alternative therapies you were using							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about your experience with clinical staff at your last visit?							

Q4. Your experience of the way clinicians communicated with you at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
The clinician has enough time to listen to what you had to say							
Helped you understand your medical condition							
Explained the purpose of tests and treatment							
Involved you in decisions							
Helped you understand what to do when you left the health service							
Accepted your decision to seek alternative treatment							
Adequately discussed your personal issues							
Guided you on how to take medicines correctly							

Q4. Your experience of the way clinicians communicated with you at your last visit

Statements				Very good			Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent				
Allowed you to have the final choice about tests								
Allowed you to have the final choice about treatments								
Really listened to what you had to say								
Do you prefer to use an interpreter when you visit the health service?							Yes	No
Was an interpreter offered during your visit to the health service?							Yes	No
Do you have any comments you would like to make about the way clinicians communicated with you at your last visit?								

Provision of information

Q5. Your experience of the information given to you by clinicians at your last visit

Statements				Very good			Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent				
The amount of useful information given about your condition								
The amount of useful information given about your treatment								
Information about how to take your medicines								
Information about side effects of any treatment								
Information about how to stay healthy								
Information about how to prevent future health problems								
Gave you useful written information								
Do you have any comments you would like to make about the information given to you by clinicians at your last visit?								

Privacy and confidentiality

Q6. Your experience of privacy at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Privacy in the waiting area							
Privacy when you were examined							
Being able to discuss personal issues that were sensitive							
Your understanding how medical records are kept private in the health service							
The way in which information was given to other clinicians							
The way the electronic records were explained to you							
Asked your permission before another clinician came to the appointment							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about your experiences of privacy at your last visit?							

Continuity of care

Q7. Your experience of the way your clinician worked with other healthcare professionals at your last visit

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Knew your medical history at the health service							
The clinician was aware of advice you have received from other health professionals							
Gave you options for specialists or other health providers you need to see							
Coordinated different healthcare professionals							
Allowed you to have the final choice about which other professionals to see							
Gave the right amount of information to other healthcare professionals							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about the way your clinician worked with other healthcare professionals at your last visit?							

Ongoing experience at the health service

Q7. Thinking about all of your visits to the health service during the time you have been at the immigration detention facility

Statements	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Not applicable	Don't know
Please rate each statement							
Quality of primary care provided to you							
Quality of mental healthcare provided to you							
Suitability of health service opening hours							
Being able to see a doctor when you needed urgent care							
Being able to see the doctor of your choice							
Contacting the health service							
Providing your test results in an understandable way							
Responding to your feedback about the health service (including complaints)							
Do you have any comments you would like to make about your experience with the health service?							

Patient demographics

How do you describe your gender?	Have you been to another health service in the past year? (eg in the community, or at another facility)
Male	Yes
Female	No
Non-binary	
Prefer not to say	
Another term (please specify)	
What is your age?	What languages do you commonly speak?
15–24 years	English
25–44 years	Arabic
45–64 years	Farsi
65 years or over	Tamil
Don't wish to say	Vietnamese
	Hindi
	Other

How long have you been at the immigration detention facility?	How many times have you visited this health service over the past 12 months?
0–3 months	Only this visit
3–6 months	2–5 times
6 months–1 year	6–10 times
1–2 years	11 or more times
2 years or more	Not sure
Not sure	

Was this visit for yourself or someone you are caring for?	What is your highest level of education?
Self	Some primary school
Someone else	Completed primary school
	Some high school
	Completed high school
	Currently studying for a degree or diploma
	Completed a trade or technical qualification
	Completed a degree or diploma
	Postgraduate degree

Open-ended question

If you could change one thing about this health service, what would you change?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please put your completed questionnaire in the secure box at reception.