Websites:

King County: https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/mental-health-substance-abuse/services/mental-health/services/ombuds.aspx

Health Care Authority: https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/ombuds-services

Q: What do the Behavioral Ombuds do?

A: They can help people resolve:

- Complaints and grievances — any dissatisfaction with services, written or verbal.
- Appeals — a reconsideration of denials, reduction or termination of services.
- Administrative (Fair) Hearings — a formal court procedure when all other avenues have been unsuccessful.

In addition to assisting with complaints and grievances, Ombuds are also sources for community resource information and referrals for additional services.

An Ombuds can help a person understand how to advocate for themselves effectively, or advocate on their behalf. They can advocate for adequate resolution and assist in setting up meetings and negotiations. The goal is always to resolve issues at the lowest level possible.

Q: Are Ombuds services mandatory for clients?

A: No, Ombuds services are completely voluntary. If a person chooses to file a grievance themselves, the Ombuds can direct them to the right process.

Q: How do referrals come in?

A: We often get referrals through provider agencies. We’ve learned that there is not a lot of awareness about the Ombuds office and services that we provide.

Q: Who do you get calls from?

We predominantly get calls from adults with behavioral health issues including substance use disorders (SUD).

Q: Is the Behavioral Health Ombuds part of the Governor’s Office?

A: No, these offices are at the local level. Here is where you can find your local office: https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/free-or-low-cost/ombuds.pdf
Q: Could a family call the Ombuds office if a client had to go through for multiple providers because of staff turnover?

A: Yes, this would be a good reason to request support from our office.

Q: Does the Behavioral Health Ombuds provide any support around choice in Substance Use Disorder Plans (SUD)?

A: Yes, if there are challenges with treatment plans, the Ombuds could come in and help with negotiation.

Q: What are some of the most frequent calls you get regarding children and youth?

A: We get calls about prescriptions and prescribers not following protocols or responding to child’s needs.

Q: How is behavioral health integration impacting your office?

A: King County is only one week into integrated care. So far, we have not seen much change in the volume or type of calls.

Q: Would Applied Behavior Analysis issues come under office?

A: Yes, if it is covered under Behavioral Health.

Q: What other services does your office address besides addressing clinical complaints?

A: We may get involved with housing issues that are attached to behavioral health services.

Q: Does the Ombuds office get involved with advanced treatment directives?

A: Yes, if client has one in place and the plan is not being followed then our office has some leverage otherwise we can encourage client to ask for an update to the plan.

Q: Does the Ombuds office help with finding services?

A: In King County, there is a mental health and substance abuse services referral assistance webpage with numbers to call. https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/mental-health-substance-abuse.aspx

Q: Have you gotten any calls for children and youth who are in Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISe)? https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/wraparound-intensive-services-wise
A: We have not received any calls in King County around children and youth in WISe services.

**Q: How does the Ombuds office assist clients who are from out-of-state in-patient and undiagnosed and don’t have resources for adult diagnosis?**

A: The Ombuds connects clients directly with King County Client Services and also assists with referrals and could facilitate services in both the out- and in-patient settings.

**Q: Does the Ombuds provide any legal support?**

A: No, we provide informal mediation between patient and clinician. We can assist in filing a grievance or appeal and also to assist clients in their requests for a change of clinician and/or agency

**Q: Do you meet with directly with clients?**

A: Yes, we can meet where clients are. For example, we can meet them at a requested location, they can come to our office, or make an appointment.

**Q: Does the Ombuds provide supports or address grievances around community living issues?**

A: We are primarily focused on clinical supports, but have had cases concerning community living interpersonal situations. As for those residing in Assisted Living Facilities such as Adult Family Homes, we would refer those issues to the Long-Term Care Ombuds office. Here is their website: [https://www.waombudsman.org/](https://www.waombudsman.org/)