

Feedback and Complaints Procedure

1. Overview of the Procedure

This procedure is a guide for **[insert organisation name]** in accepting, responding to and resolving feedback to the organisation from consumers and stakeholders.

This procedure should be read with the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Conflict Resolution Process.

2. Considerations

All **[insert organisation name]** staff, Board members, students and volunteers are given information about the feedback management process as part of their induction.

All staff, volunteers and Board members are able to receive feedback. Following receipt of a complaint, documentation should be passed on to the **[relevant positions]** who will coordinate a response to the complaint.

3. Principles

Consumers have a right to complain about the support they are receiving without fear of retribution; complaints are received, and responded to fairly and promptly, without compromising the support provided to consumers. Staff will take steps to ensure that consumers feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

Diversity aspects of the person giving feedback are taken into consideration, and accommodated, by people receiving and responding to feedback.

Staff will not discuss the complaint with people who are not parties to it.

[insert organisation name] will apologise when inappropriate actions or inaction have resulted in harm and tell the complainant how **[insert organisation name]** plans to prevent recurrence.

[insert organisation name] will use the results of complaint investigations to improve systems and risk management.

4. Procedure Steps

4.1 Receiving Feedback

Feedback can be accepted verbally or in writing by any staff, volunteer or Board member.

When feedback is received, **[insert organisation name]** staff, volunteers or Board Members will:

- respond with respect, in a positive, non-defensive manner
- courteously thank the person for providing feedback
- acknowledge impact of the issue on the person providing feedback
- recognise reasonable expectations of consumers and their carers
- clarify whether feedback is an observation, suggestion for improvement, compliment or complaint.

Depending on the nature of the feedback, one or more of the following actions may be appropriate:

- Record the information (if communicated verbally) and pass the information on to the specific individual concerned (and their supervisor if appropriate)
- Recommend use of the Conflict Resolution Process
- Raise the information at a regular staff and/or Board meeting
- Record the information in the relevant staff, client or project file.

The CEO/Manager may include relevant feedback received by the organisation in reports to the Board of Directors.

4.2 Clarifying the Nature of Feedback

If there is uncertainty about the feedback being an observation or a complaint, questions may be asked of the person giving feedback, such as *“is this an issue we should consider as a complaint?”* or *“would you like me to forward your concern on to the organisation for you?”*

4.3 Responding to Feedback

Depending on the type of feedback received, particularly if it is a comment or suggestion for improvement, it may be appropriate to contact the individual who gave the feedback to communicate any changes made as a result of their suggestion. This will contribute to a positive relationship between the organisation and its consumers and stakeholders.

Any complaint or feedback that appears to indicate physical or sexual abuse, or be of a criminal nature, is responded to according to the separate policies on responding to abuse and employee misconduct.

4.4 Recording Compliments and Complaints

When it is established that the feedback is a compliment or complaint, staff, volunteers and Board members complete a Feedback and Complaints Form, detailing relevant information, and forwarded to the **[relevant position]**.

If a compliment or complaint concerns the **[relevant position]**, forward to the CEO/Manager or the Board President.

If a compliment or complaint is sent in writing, the staff, volunteer or Board member receiving the complaint completes the Feedback and Complaints Form with the written documentation attached and forwarded to the **[relevant position]**. If the compliment or complaint concerns the **[relevant position]**, it will be forwarded to the CEO/Manager or the Board President.

4.5 Compliments and Complaints Register

Once the Feedback and Complaints Form is received by the **[relevant position]**, details are recorded in a Compliments and Complaints Register, including the date the compliment or complaint was made, name and contact details of person providing feedback, nature of compliment or complaint, staff involved (if any), action taken and results.

4.6 Responding to a Complaint

Written communication will be sent to the complainant (or the complainant's nominee) within 5-7 working days of the complaint being received. The response details what is being done to investigate and resolve the complaint.

In responding to complaints, staff and Board members:

- Acknowledge the complaint - acknowledge the concerns and experiences of someone making a complaint, particularly if the issue has caused distress or considerable inconvenience.
- Attempt to resolve the complaint directly with the complainant - clarify the specific issue that the individual is complaining about and their desired outcomes. It may be necessary to contact the complainant to ask for more information.

- Detail how the complaint will be investigated - provide clear timeframes and the contact details for an appropriate person who can be contacted by the complainant if necessary.
- Consider the sensitive and/or confidential nature of a complaint and the privacy of the individual making the complaint - staff carefully consider what information is recorded and to whom within the organisation the information is communicated to. When completing a Complaints Record Form, only record factual information that can be supported by evidence or note that the information is not yet substantiated.

[insert organisation name] aims to investigate and resolve all complaints within a month of receiving the complaint. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative timeframe for resolution.

A register of complaints and files containing details of all complaints, actions and resolutions are filed securely in [insert location].

4.7 Conflict Resolution

Where the complaint appears to be a referring to a conflict between two people, it may be appropriate to use the organisation's Conflict Resolution Process.

4.8 Complaint Resolution and Follow Up

Within two months of the complaint being resolved, the organisation will follow up with the complainant to review their satisfaction with the actions taken.

Feedback information (both positive and negative) is to be considered in operational planning as well as implementation and review activities in the areas of governance, risk management, client services, project management and work health and safety.