

PROCEDURE

Feedback, Complaint and Resolution

Required for Parent Folder - Yes

1. Purpose / Objective

This procedure provides guidance to *interested parties who wish to provide feedback, raise an issue or concern, or make a complaint or compliment to or about us, regarding our services.

This procedure is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively to the satisfactory resolution within a reasonable timeframe and that appropriate actions are taken to improve our services where required.

**Interested parties include the public, clients, children and their family, parents, guardians, carers, friends, workers, advocates or agencies who provide support, our members, community visitors, other professionals and organisations who have a relationship or connection with us.*

2. Policy Relationships

AEIOU Foundation aims to consistently provide services that meet the needs of clients and stakeholders and satisfy applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements. We undertake a range of strategies to adopt a “Best Practice” approach to monitor, measure and respond to and improve customer experience and satisfaction.

This **Feedback, Complaints and resolution Procedure** should be read in conjunction with our **Feedback, Complaints Management and Resolution Framework Policy**, which provides information about the key principles and concepts underpinning our system.

There is a close relationship with the **Incidents Management and Reportable Incidents Management Plan** where serious incidents or complaints brought to our attention are assessed and treated accordingly.

3. How to provide feedback, raise an issue or concern and make a complaint

People have the right to complain and provide feedback about the services they receive and we encourage you to tell us when we are doing things well and when things could be improved. We do our best to provide quality supports and services to our clients but issues can occur. If you have a concern about your current supports or services, it is important that you talk to us about it. Complaints and feedback are important—they can help us improve the quality of our services.

If you feel comfortable, we encourage you to raise your concern or complaint directly with us first, as this is often the best way to have your issue resolved quickly. You may seek support from family, friend or an independent advocate person to support you in making a complaint.

Talk to us! This person could be your Centre Manager, or another staff member

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What is feedback?

Feedback may be opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or handling of a complaint that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Type of subjects could include:

- The way services are provided
- Conduct of workers
- Decisions that have been made
- Privacy breach of personal information
- Policies or processes
- Physical environment or safety
- Communication or information
- Another quality related matter.

Who can make a complaint?

- Anyone can provide feedback, raise an issue or concern, and make a complaint
- A complaint can be made to us anonymously.

How can complaints be made?

Complaints can be made to us directly in many ways:

- In person
- By phone, contacting your local AEIOU centre, or Central Office - <https://aeiou.org.au/contact>
- In writing addressed to the Designated Complaints Officer
Email - info@aeiou.org.au, or
Post - PO Box 8072 Woolloongabba Qld 4012
- Website Online form - <https://aeiou.org.au/feedback>
- Using the **Compliments, Complaints and Feedback form**, downloadable from our website or accessed directly from our centres
- By video or audio recording and sent to us.

For NDIS participants, complaints could be made to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/> . Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. If using National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.

The NDIS Commission can take complaints about:

- services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
- services and supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to notify an external agency about a complaint, if the matter relates to a serious reportable incident or criminal activity. Details are provided in the **Incidents and Reportable Incidents Management Plan Policy**.

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Support to make a complaint

We can support you in a complaint in the following ways:

- Provide information about how to make a complaint
- We provide a safe environment for you to make a complaint or provide negative feedback without fear of adverse consequences, retribution or loss of service as a result of making a complaint
- Facilitate participation of an advocate or other representative or support person, if required
- We will appropriately respond to complaints, acknowledge, assess and resolve the matter in a fair, efficient and timely manner
- We will take action in relation to issues raised in complaints
- If a serious risk is identified, we will take corrective action
- Confidentiality – We will keep information confidential and only disclose it if required by law, or otherwise appropriate in the circumstances as part determining the facts in an investigation. Some matters may require wider consultation and information gathering in order to understand and appropriately respond to the complaint. In this case we may disclose the substance of a complaint without revealing the identity of the complainant unless consent is obtained. We won't disclose any personal information about the complaint beyond what is appropriately necessary to understand and respond to the complaint.
- We will work directly with you and people affected to resolve the complaint in a timely way
- We will act with procedural fairness with all parties involved
- Access to a current copy of our Feedback, Complaints Management and Resolution Framework Policy and Feedback, Complaints and Resolution Process Procedure to complainants
- We advise you how the complaint or issue may be raised with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commissioner and give appropriate support and assistance to people affected by an issue raised in a complaint to contact them
- We acknowledge Whistle Blower Protection legislation and protections in place for people that disclose information to the Commissioner.

4. Responding to a complaint

When responding to complaints, staff (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with complaint handling procedures as well as other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints. We consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below



4.1 Receive

Unless the issue has been resolved at the outset, we will record a complaint and its supporting information. We assign a unique identifier to the complaint file and record this in the complaints register.

The complaint record will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues and concerns raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

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Note: AEIOU records complaints resolved at first point of contact, the frontline. Records maintained in this way are added to the pool of data within the Improvement - Complaints register. We regularly analyse this information to identify system issues and track more accurately the complaint handling activities of staff.

4.2 Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 2 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter, and phone) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

Note: The suggested time frame may vary according to priority and risk rating applied.

4.3 Assess and investigate

Initial assessment - After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

Investigating the complaint - After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

4.4 Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or reconsideration appeal.

4.5 Close the complaint: document and analyse data

Document – We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

Analyse data - We will ensure that data and outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported.

5. References / Information

5.1 Privacy, Confidentiality and Records Requirements

Privacy - is a human right. Rights related to privacy are set out in Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, the Australian Privacy Principles and State and Territory Privacy laws.

Information provided in a complaint is kept confidential and only disclosed if required by law or if the disclosure is otherwise appropriate in the circumstances where disclosure would be reasonably expected. We will only provide information about a complaint to those individuals directly involved and all parties will be informed of the need for upholding privacy and confidentiality. All information regarding the complaint will be stored securely in the client's file and our Improvement - Complaints Register.

There are certain circumstances where exceptions can apply and our workers may disclose information about a person that can be without consent (incl. child's parent/guardian) involved. We have mandatory reporting obligations on child protection matters, and obligations to report incidences of violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse, and sexual misconduct to the Commission and police.

5.2 External Provider / Useful Contacts

Provider/organisation	Contact details	Requirement
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission)	Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/complaints National Relay Service: ask for 1800 035 544.	Complaints function overseen by the Commission about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• services or supports not provided in a safe and respectful way• services and supports not delivered to an appropriate standard Complaints may be referred by us. Complainants may complain directly if they choose.
NDIA National Disability Insurance Agency	https://www.ndis.gov.au/ Email to feedback@ndis.gov.au Phone: 1800 800 110	For complaints about NDIS Plans and the NDIA itself. Complaints about services providers is made through the Commission.
Commonwealth Ombudsman	http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint Phone: 1300 362 072 Indigenous Line: 1800 060 789 Post: GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601 TIS: 131 450. NRS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TTY - Ph 133 677 then ask for 1300 362 072• Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 362 072	For complaints about the NDIA or NDIS Commission and complaints about other Commonwealth Government departments and agencies.

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Independent Advocacy Agencies	The Disability Advocacy Finder: https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/	To find an independent advocacy agency in your area. AEIOU is able to cooperate with, and facilitate arrangements for, advocates (including independent advocates) and other representatives of persons with disability who are affected by complaints or incidents and who wish to be independently supported in that process by an advocate or other representative.
TIS – Translating and Interpreting Service	https://www.tisnational.gov.au/ Free Interpreting Service (enquiries about free services) Phone: 1300 575 847 Email: tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au Immediate phone interpreting (24 hours, every day of the year) Phone: 131 450 (within Australia) and ask for an interpreter to contact us on 07 3320 7500.	Interpreter services
National Relay Service	https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service	The National Relay Service (NRS) is a government initiative that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment to make and receive phone calls.
Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC)	https://www.acnc.gov.au/ Phone: 13 22 62	The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission is an Australian statutory body and the national regulator of the voluntary sector, including charities and other not for profits.
Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors	Phone: 1800 177 120 TTY: (07) 3896 3471 Email: disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/	For information about disability services in Qld and the transition to the NDIS.
Queensland Ombudsman	(07) 3005 7000 Toll free 1800 068 908 Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au	For complaints about Qld Government departments or agencies.
Education & Standards Board of South Australia (SA)	Phone: 08 8226 0077 Email: eecsb.nationalqualityframework@sa.gov.au educationstandardsboard@sa.gov.au https://esb.sa.gov.au/#	The SA state government authority responsible for regulating early childhood services and schools under the National Quality Framework. Report for serious incidents in place.
Education and Early Childhood Services (Qld)	Phone: 13 QGOV (137468) http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/about/contact.html	For information about the Early Childhood Education and Care Services. Relative to the Queensland Education and Care Services Act 2013 and Disability Services Act 2006. Report for serious incidents in place.
Human Rights	Office of the Attorney-General https://www.ag.gov.au/ Australian Human Rights Commission https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/about-childrens-rights	For information about the rights of people with a disability and children's rights.
Australian Institute of Family Studies	https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/cfca-resource-sheet/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect	For information about reporting child abuse and neglect and mandatory reporting requirements Australia wide.
Kids Helpline Lifeline	Ph: 1800 55 1800 Ph: 13 11 14.	If you require assistance or if you would like to talk to a trained professional about the issues affecting children
Police or emergency services	Ph: 000	

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5.3 Document Ownership and Review

Approver	Finance & Risk Committee
Document owner	General Manager
Content owner	Risk and Compliance Officer
Contributor/s	Executive Management Team
Metadata	Feedback, complaint, compliment, positive, customer, experience, negative, appeal, reconsideration, incident, incidents, satisfaction, survey, forum, critical, serious, reportable, notifiable, emergency, privacy, safety, WHS, health, NDIS, breach, protection, major, circumstance, mandatory, abuse, neglect, exploitation, death.

5.4 Document History

Version	Revision detail / section	Date of issue
8	Rewrite to align with NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Practice Standards	29/05/2019