

## 2.7 FEEDBACK, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out how any person can provide feedback and make complaints about any aspect of ISP operations and the process that ISP will take to address or respond to feedback and complaints.

### Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all stakeholders of the organisation, including clients, families and carers, advocates, staff, volunteers, contractors, other service providers, government agencies and members of the community.

Issues raised by ISP staff (where applicable), volunteers and contractors would generally be dealt with under *ISP Disputes and Grievances Policy and Procedure*, however from time to time staff may raise issues or provide feedback that is best dealt with under this Policy.

### Definitions

**Compliment** - an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about an individual staff member, a team or a service.

**Complaint** - an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

For the purpose of this policy and procedure, a complaint is defined as an issue of a minor nature that can be resolved promptly or within 24 hours, and does not require a detailed investigation. Complaints include an expression of displeasure, such as poor service, and any verbal or written complaint directly related to the service (including general and notifiable complaints).

**General complaint** - addresses any aspect of the service e.g. a lost clothing item or the service's fees. The complaint must be dealt with as soon as is practicable to avoid escalation of the issue.

**Grievance** - a formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature e.g. the service is in breach of a Policy or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.

**Notifiable complaint** - A complaint that alleges a breach of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act* or *Regulations*, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. See *ISP Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedure* for how to manage notifiable complaints.

## Policy

- Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provide ISP with valuable information about client satisfaction and an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of its service. Feedback is taken seriously by ISP and seen as an opportunity for improvement.
- ISP records and handles feedback effectively in order to identify areas for improvement, coordinate a consistent approach to complaint resolution, reduce the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.
- Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity, in a way that respects and values the person's feedback can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence about ISP services. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, transparent, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system will assist ISP to achieve this.
- ISP has an effective feedback, compliment and complaint handling system that addresses the principles of visibility and accessibility, responsiveness, assessment and investigation, feedback, continuous improvement and service excellence.
- The ISP approach to feedback, compliments and complaints management ensures:
  - people understand their rights and responsibilities;
  - information on the feedback, compliment and complaint management process is easily accessible;
  - people's confidentiality is maintained throughout the process;
  - increased satisfaction of clients in the management of their feedback, compliments and complaints;
  - the recording of data to identify existing or emerging trends or systemic issues;
  - staff demonstrate an awareness of ISP feedback, compliments and complaints management processes;
  - staff develop and demonstrate the range of skills and capabilities required to manage compliments, complaints and feedback; and
  - an organisational culture that is focused on effective, person-centred complaints resolution and utilising feedback and compliments for continuous improvement.

## Procedures

- ISP will promote best practice, continuous improvement and an open, supportive, respectful culture that encourages and supports staff, clients and other stakeholders to make complaints and report concerns without fear of retribution. This will be assessed in yearly Performance Reviews of management staff.
- Upon commencement, all staff will undergo Induction, which will include information on staff retention approaches including their right to access ISP feedback, complaints and

dispute resolution process. They will also be trained in this policy and procedure and in providing stakeholders with information about feedback, compliments and complaints.

- Where staff are employed, annual Performance Reviews will assess staff awareness of this policy and procedure and their roles and responsibilities when service users make complaints. Additional on-the-job and formal training will be provided where required. This will also be monitored informally by Management Team.
- The Agenda for meetings will include a standing item on Continuous Improvement, including staff and client feedback and complaints.
- The ISP *NDIS Care Client Charter* and *Aged Care Client Charter*, Handbook, website and a specific Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Brochure will provide clients, their families and carers and all other stakeholders with information about this policy and procedure, in an easy to understand format. This will include information on how feedback and complaints will be addressed and who to contact to provide feedback and complaints to external agencies, including external advocacy and support agencies. Information will be clearly displayed in ISP's premises and provided by staff when requested.
- Any client or other stakeholder wishing to lodge feedback or a complaint will be provided with information regarding this Policy.
- Information about providing feedback and making complaints and the forms to do so will be provided in a variety of formats, including in Easy English and alternative languages.
- Each service delivery point will clearly display information about providing feedback and making complaints and have *Feedback and Complaint forms* available and easily accessible.
- Interpreters and referrals to advocates can be provided to support clients or other stakeholders to provide feedback or make a complaint within ISP, or via the appropriate external complaints system.
- ISP staff will provide all clients, their families and carers with this policy and procedure when they first access the service and, throughout service delivery, remind them of the Policy and their right to make a complaint without fear of such affecting their service.
- All personal information ISP collects to manage feedback or complaints will be handled in accordance with privacy legislation and ISP *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*. Feedback and complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner and will only be discussed with the people directly involved. All information regarding feedback and complaints will be kept securely in accordance with ISP *Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure*.

- Complaints and feedback can be lodged by a third party on behalf of another person, if their consent has been provided.
- The Management Team will track and analyse feedback and complaint data to identify any ongoing issues. Feedback, complaints and dispute resolution matters will be reported on a monthly basis as part of the Manager's report on Continuous Improvement.
- In accordance with the Disability Act 2006 (Vic), ISP will report annually to the Disability Services Commissioner in the form required by the Disability Services Commissioner, specifying the number of complaints received and how the complaints were resolved.

### Feedback

- Feedback can be provided to any staff member at any time in any way by any stakeholder, including through:
  - a staff member (where applicable);
  - ISP public email address, mail or phone contact;
  - Feedback and Complaint Forms
  - staff planning days and management meetings (involving client and other stakeholder representatives);
  - client forums;
  - staff collection of client feedback after each major interaction with the service (e.g. initial assessment and planning; reviews; exit);
  - annual client service delivery and satisfaction surveys. All clients will be asked to complete these surveys; and
  - annual staff and stakeholder satisfaction surveys. All staff will be asked to complete these surveys and stakeholders will be selected on a random basis.
- Where feedback is provided verbally, the receiving staff member will accurately and promptly transcribe the feedback onto an ISP *Feedback and Complaint Form*.
- Provision of feedback through any of ISP channels is voluntary.

## ISP complaints management process

The ISP complaints management process can be simplified into five steps:

1. Receive;
2. Record;
3. Acknowledge;
4. Resolve; and
5. Communicate resolution.

### **1. Receive**

- To lodge a complaint, individuals are encouraged to speak directly to a staff member first, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the complaints and grievances procedures.
- The staff member will:
  - **Listen** – openly to the concerns being raised by the complainant.
  - **Ask** – the complainant what outcome they are seeking.
  - **Inform** – the complainant clearly of the complaint process, the time the process takes and set realistic expectations, ensuring they understand their confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, and only the people involved directly will be spoken to.
  - **Be accountable** – and empathic towards the affected person and action all commitments made.
  - **Assess** – situations that pose an immediate threat or danger, or require a specialised response.
- All complaints and grievances will be referred to the Management Team for resolution.
- The Management Team will discuss minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved promptly or within 24 hours, the Manager will treat it as a grievance (advising the individual of their right to lodge a grievance if they have not already done so, with the assistance of a support person or advocate if they wish).

- A *Feedback and Complaints Form* will be readily available to individuals to lodge their grievance, however it is not mandatory that they use the form. The *Feedback and Complaints Form* can be used to make anonymous complaints.
- Grievances can be lodged:
  - directly with a staff member, either verbally or by providing a completed *Feedback and Complaints Form*;
  - by email to: [intsupptpersonnel@outlook.com](mailto:intsupptpersonnel@outlook.com);
  - By phone on 0490 951 021;
  - or in writing to:  
The Managing Director  
Integrated Support Personnel  
PO Box 1186  
Kunyang LPO  
Mt Eliza Victoria 3930.
- At any time, individuals can make a complaint directly to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA); the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit; the Victorian Disability Services Commission; the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria; the Victorian Ombudsman; the Office of the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection; or the Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).
- All clients making a complaint will be encouraged to use an advocate of their choice to act on their behalf if they wish. The advocate may be a family member or friend, or sourced (with the assistance of a staff member if required) through the National Disability Advocacy Program.
- If a complaint alleges actual or possible criminal activity or abuse or neglect, it will be referred to the Managing Director immediately. The Managing Director will report the complaint as per ISP *Incident Management Policy and Procedure* and work with the relevant authority to investigate the allegation.
- Staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure the person who made the complaint, any person on whose behalf the complaint was made, and a person with a disability is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

## **2. Record**

- The Managing Director will:

- Record – all information that is relevant to the compliment or complaint, in its original and simplest form, in *ISP Complaints and Grievances Register*.
- Store and protect – the *Complaints and Grievances Register* in a secure file, accessible only to the Managing Director.

### **3. Acknowledge**

- The Managing Director will:
  - Acknowledge – receipt of the grievance within 2 working days to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the person who raised the complaint.
  - Provide anonymity – a person may request to remain anonymous in their lodgement and therefore contact may not be possible or expected.
  - Seek desired outcomes – provide realistic expectations and refer the matter to other organisations where they're identified as being more suitable to handle such.
  - Avoid conflict of interest – by appointing a person unrelated to the matter as an investigator if necessary.
  - Provide timeframes and expectations – to the complainant where possible.

### **4. Resolve**

- In resolving a complaint or grievance, the Managing Director will:
  - Involve the complainant – keep them informed of the progress of the complaint and discuss any disparities identified in the information held.
  - Request additional information – when required, applying a timeframe that limits when it is to be provided by.
  - Consider extensions – only where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant with an explanation of the need.
  - Record – all decisions or actions of the complaint investigation in *ISP Complaints Register*.
  - Focus – on the identified complaint matters only. A complaint is not an opportunity to review a whole case.
- Investigation of complaints will not be conducted by a person about whom a complaint has been made. If required, the Managing Director will determine the appropriate person to undertake the investigation.

### **5. Communicate resolution**

- ISP will respond to all complaints and grievances as soon as possible and within 28 days from acknowledgement.
- If a complaint or grievance cannot be responded to in full within 28 days of acknowledgement, an update will be issued to the complainant. The update will provide

the date by which a full response can be expected. The update should be provided verbally in the first instance then confirmed in writing.

- The Managing Director (or delegate) will:
  - Discuss the outcome – where possible, verbally with the complainant before providing written advice and allowing them the opportunity to make further contact following receipt of the written advice.
  - Include information on recourse – what further action may be available to the complainant at the conclusion of the complaint investigation. An action of recourse may be to escalate the matter further with an external agency or for a further review within the organisation.
  - Provide a further review – to enable the first investigation to be reviewed for soundness and allow additional information not available in the first complaint to be included.
  - Identify opportunities – relay complaint outcomes to the appropriate area within the organisation for action to improve service delivery.
  - Seek Feedback – from the complainant regarding their experience of the complaints process.
- Support will be provided to assist complainants' understanding of correspondence regarding complaints and grievances where required (e.g. interpreters, referral to advocates, etc.).
- Options for actions responding to a complaint include but are not limited to:
  - explaining processes;
  - rectifying an issue;
  - providing an apology;
  - ongoing monitoring of issues;
  - training or education of staff.
- The ISP *Complaints and Grievances Register* will be used by the Management Team to record every complaint, track investigation progress and outcomes and how the outcomes have been communicated to stakeholders.

### **Complaints Escalation and Dispute Resolution**

- If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or grievance they will be provided with the details of other agencies they can use to assist them to achieve a resolution. If required, and requested, ISP will provide assistance to clients to access an external complaints process of their choosing.
- Escalated complaints will be tracked in the *Complaints and Grievances Register* in the same manner as other complaints and the same communication processes as outlined above will be applied. If necessary, the Management Team will undertake communication

with the complainant.

- Complaints to the NDIA can be lodged:
  - by email to [feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au)
  - by phone on 1800 800 110.
- Complaints to the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit can be lodged:
  - by email to [complaints.reception@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:complaints.reception@dhhs.vic.gov.au)
  - by phone on 1300 884 706
  - by post to Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne VIC 3001
- Complaints to the Victorian Disability Services Commission can be lodged:
  - by email to [complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au)
  - by phone on 1800 677 342 (TTY 1300 726 563)
  - online at [www.odsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au)
  - via Skype by calling or emailing to make an appointment first
- Complaints to the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner can be lodged:
  - by phone on 1800 550 552
  - online at [www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au](http://www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au)
  - by post to: The Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, GPO Box 9848, Melbourne VIC 3001
- Complaints to the Office of the Public Advocate can be lodged:
  - online at [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)
  - by phone on 1300 309 337
  - Complaints to the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria can be lodged:
    - by email to [childsafe@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafe@ccyp.vic.gov.au)
    - by phone on 1300 78 29 78
- Complaints to the Office of the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection can be lodged:
  - By phone on 1300 666 444
  - online at [www.cpdp.vic.gov.au](http://www.cpdp.vic.gov.au)
- Complaints to the Victorian Ombudsman can be lodged:
  - by phone on 03 9613 6222 or (regional areas) 1800 806 314
  - online at [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)
- Complaints to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission can be lodged:

- by phone on 1300 735 135
- online at [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au)
- NDIS participants purchasing products and services have rights and protections under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), including provisions on customer guarantees and unfair contract terms. Consumer Affairs Victoria provide information and advice and in some cases, dispute resolution services for customer disputes under the ACL.
- In addition to ACL, clients of ISP can also contact the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) if they have concerns regarding consumer protection in relation to finances.

### **Reporting**

- In their annual report to the Disability Services Commissioner, the Managing Director must report on the number, type and outcome of complaints, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

### **Legislation, Standards, Policy and Related Documents**

- *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Disability Amendment Act 2012 and 2013 (Vic)*
- *Human Services Standards (Vic) – Empowerment*
- *4.5. Complaints Management (Departmental Policies, Procedures and Initiatives, Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services)*
- *AS ISO 10002-2014 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations*
- *NDIA Terms of Business*
- *Australian Consumer Law*
- *Ageed Care Act 1997 (Cwth), and relevant amendments*
- *The Records Principles 2014 (Cwth)*
- *Home Care Common Standards (Cwth) – Complaints and Service User feedback*
- *Australian Consumer Law*

### **Relevant Organisational Documents**

- *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Brochure*
- *Complaints and Grievances Register*
- *Continuous Improvement Plan*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*
- *Information Management Policy and Procedure*

### **Monitoring and Review**

- Annual service delivery and satisfaction surveys will include questions regarding:
  - satisfaction with ISP feedback and complaints processes;
  - whether stakeholders have received adequate information about making complaints and their awareness of complaints mechanisms;
  - the extent to which clients and their supporters feel they have been included in the review of feedback and their satisfaction with this process;
  - whether stakeholders have received adequate information about how the organisation will use feedback, complaints and appeals information; and
  - any barriers to lodging complaints and feedback.
- The ISP *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record how the outcomes of feedback have been communicated to stakeholders. Positive feedback will be recorded in the Plan as a way of recording things the organisation does well. If positive feedback relates to a client or staff member, that person will be formally recognised by the Managing Director.
- This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team and incorporate client and other stakeholder feedback.

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**Endorsement Date:** 31/01/2018

**Last Review Date:**

**Next Review Date:** 31/01/2019

*This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually and changes endorsed by the Management Team.*

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