

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose and Scope

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's operations and the process that ISP will take to address or respond to feedback and complaints.

It applies to all stakeholders of the business, including participants, families, carers, advocates, staff, other service providers, government agencies and members of the community. It meets relevant legislation, regulations and Standards as set out in Schedule 1, Legislative References.

Feedback and Complaints raised by ISP staff will generally be dealt with under ISP's *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 and procedure.

ISP also has obligations in relation to incident management systems and reportable incidents that may apply to a complaint. See ISP's Incident Management policies and procedures.

Failure to comply with the complaints management requirements of the NDIS legislation and rules may lead to the NDIS Commissioner taking compliance and enforcement action against ISP.

Applicable NDIS Practice Standards

Feedback and Complaints Management

Outcome

Each participant has knowledge of and access to the provider's complaints management and resolution system. Complaints and other feedback made by all parties are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and well-managed.

Indicators

- A complaints management and resolution system is maintained that is relevant and proportionate to the scope and complexity of supports delivered and the size and scale of the organisation. The system follows principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and complies with the requirements under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018*.
- Each participant is provided with information on how to give feedback or make a complaint, including avenues external to the provider, and their right to access advocates. There is a supportive environment for any person who provides feedback and/or makes complaints.
- Demonstrated continuous improvement in complaints and feedback management by regular review of complaint and feedback policies and procedures, seeking of participant views on the accessibility of the complaints management and resolution system, and incorporation of feedback throughout the provider's organisation.

- All workers are aware of, trained in, and comply with the required procedures in relation to complaints handling.

Definitions

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

Complainant - a person who makes a complaint, or has a complaint made on their behalf.

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.¹

Procedural Fairness – a principal that requires a fair and proper procedure be used when making a decision.

Policy

Compliments, complaints and other feedback provide ISP with valuable information about participant satisfaction and an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of its service.

Feedback is taken seriously by ISP and is seen as an opportunity for improvement. ISP's complaints management and resolution system ensures people can easily make a complaint and have them dealt with fairly and quickly.

ISP makes information available to participants and other stakeholders about how to make a complaint to it, the NDIS Commissioner and any other relevant body and keeps adequate records about complaints received.

Procedures

General

ISP's Management Team must promote best practice, continuous improvement and an open, respectful culture that encourages and supports staff, participants and other stakeholders to make complaints without fear of retribution. This is assessed in yearly Performance Reviews of Management Team staff.

As per ISP's *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*, all staff must undergo Induction, which includes training in ISP's feedback and complaints processes.

Staff knowledge and application of this policy and procedure, ISP's feedback and complaints system and their obligation to protect children from harm is monitored on a day-to-day basis and through annual Performance Reviews. Additional formal and on-the-job training is provided to staff where required.

Agendas for team meetings include a standing item on Continuous Improvement, including a review of feedback and complaints.

ISP uses its *Participant Charter*, *Participant Handbook*, website and a *Feedback and*

¹ AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations

Complaints Form to provide participants, families, carers and all other stakeholders with information about this policy and procedure, in an easy to understand format. Information provided includes how to make a complaint to ISP and to the NDIS Commissioner and other external bodies, how complaints will be addressed and external advocacy and support services that can assist people in the complaints process.

Staff must provide participants and their supporters with information about ISP's feedback and complaints processes when they first access the service. Throughout service delivery, staff must remind participants and their supporters of their right to make a complaint without fear of affecting their service. Any person wishing to lodge feedback or a complaint must also be provided with this information.

To ensure participants understand their right to make a complaint and how to make a complaint, staff must provide information to them and their supporters in ways that suit their individual communication needs. Written information can be provided in Easy English or explained verbally by staff. Staff can also help participants access interpreters or advocates where required.

The Managing Director must track and review feedback and complaints to identify ongoing issues using ISP's *Complaints Register* and report feedback and complaints data to the Management Team at its monthly meetings.

Privacy and Information Management

All personal information ISP collects to manage feedback or complaints must be handled in accordance with ISP's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*.

Staff must keep information about complaints confidential. They may only disclose necessary detail if they are required to do so by law, or if not disclosing is likely to place the safety, health or wellbeing of any person at risk. Staff must take all reasonable steps to notify the complainant before deciding not to keep personal information confidential.

ISP's *Complaints Register* must be used to record information about feedback and complaints; any action taken to resolve complaints and the outcome of any action taken. All information regarding feedback and complaints is kept securely in accordance with ISP's *Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure*. All records regarding complaints must be retained for at least 7 years from the date they are created.

Feedback

Providing feedback to ISP is voluntary.

Feedback can be provided at any time, in any way, by any stakeholder, through:

- a staff member;
- email, mail or phone;
- ISP's Feedback and Complaints Form;
- ISP's website;
- service delivery planning days (involving participants and other stakeholders);
- Management Team meetings (involving participants and other stakeholders);
- staff collection of feedback after a person interacts with the service (e.g. initial assessment and planning; reviews; exit, etc.);
- annual participant satisfaction surveys. All participants or their representatives or families 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 transcribe it onto an *ISP Feedback and Complaints Form*.

Complaints

People can make a complaint about any aspects of ISP's services, including breaches of policies and procedures or the Code of Conduct.

ISP's complaints management process can be simplified into five steps:

1. Complaint Lodgement

To lodge a complaint, people are encouraged to speak directly to a staff member first, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to ISP's complaints procedures.

Staff must:

- listen openly to the concerns being raised by the complainant;
- ask the complainant what outcome they are seeking;
- inform the complainant of the complaint process and how to formally make a complaint to ISP, the NDIS Commissioner or other complaints body and the time the process takes;
- be empathic towards the person and action all commitments made; and
- action situations that pose an immediate threat or danger or require a specialised response.

If the complaint is resolved, it must be reported to the Managing Director for inclusion in ISP's *Feedback and Complaints Register*.

If the complaint cannot be resolved promptly or within 24 hours, it must be referred to the Managing Director. The Managing Director will advise the person of their right to lodge a formal complaint 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 made available to the individual to lodge their complaint, however it is not mandatory that they use the form.

Formal complaints can be lodged:

- directly with a staff member, either verbally or by providing a completed *Feedback and Complaints Form*;
- by email to: maria@integratedsupportpersonnel.com.au
- By phone on 0402 396 907;
- or in writing to:
The Managing Director
Integrated Support Personnel
PO Box 1186 Kunyung LPO, Mt Eliza VIC 3930

Mail and phone submissions as well as the *Feedback and Complaints Form* can be used to make anonymous complaints.

Complaints and feedback can be lodged by a third party on behalf of another person, if their

consent or the consent of their legal representative has been provided.

At any time, people can make a complaint about NDIS service providers or the support they provide to the NDIS Commission or other external complaints bodies (listed below).

Staff must assist people making a complaint, or people with disability affected by a complaint, to contact the NDIS Commission or other complaints body, where this is required.

People making or impacted by a complaint must 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 assistance from staff if required) through the National Disability Advocacy Program.

If a complaint alleges actual or possible criminal activity or abuse or neglect, it must be referred to the Managing Director immediately. The Managing Director must report and action the complaint as per ISP's Incident Management policies and procedures.

Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure complainants or people with disability affected by complaints are not adversely affected or fear retribution because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Complaints made to ISP, the NDIS Commission and other complaints bodies can be withdrawn at any time.

Where a complaint about ISP is made to the NDIS Commission, all staff must:

- comply with any orders or requests made by the NDIS Commission; and
- assist in any resolution process or inquiry undertaken by the NDIS Commission.

External Complaints Bodies

Outside ISP, complaints can be made to the following bodies.

The NDIS Commission:

- online at www.ndiscommission.gov.au; and
- by phone on 1800 035 544.

Participants also have rights and protections under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), including provisions on customer guarantees and unfair contract terms. Consumer Affairs Victoria (www.consumer.vic.gov.au) provides information and advice about customer disputes under the ACL.

Privacy Complaints

Complaints about privacy or the handling of personal or health information can be reported to the regulatory bodies listed in ISP's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*.

Complaints about ISP's Supported Independent Living and/or Accommodation Services

Participants in Supported Independent Living services or other accommodation arrangements can be supported by the Queensland Community Visitor Scheme. Community Visitors are coordinated by the Queensland Office of the Public Guardian. They visit disability accommodation, mental health services, private hostels and Forensic Disability Service Community Care Units. Their role is to make inquiries and lodge complaints for, or on behalf

of, residents of these accommodation services. Further information can be provided by the Office of the Public Guardian on 1300 653 187.

Participants in Supported Independent Living services or other accommodation arrangements can be supported by Official Community Visitors (OCVs). OCVs are coordinated by the New South Wales Ombudsman. OCVs visit government and non-government accommodation services for children, young people and people with a disability throughout NSW. Their role is to promote residents' rights, identify issues raised by residents, provide residents with information, help resolve concerns and inform the Ministers and the Ombudsman about the quality of services being delivered. Further information about OCVs can be provided by the OCV Team Leader on 02 9286 1000.

Participants in Supported Independent Living services or other accommodation arrangements can be supported the Victorian Community Visitor Scheme. Community Visitors are coordinated by the Victorian Office of the Public Advocate. They visit disability accommodation services, supported residential services and mental health facilities. Their role is to observe service delivery, make enquiries, inspect documents and communicate with residents to ensure they are being supported with dignity and respect and identify any issues of concern. Further information can be provided by the Office of the Public Advocate on 1300 309 337.

Complaints About the NDIA

Complaints about the NDIA should be directed to the Agency itself or the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Complaints to the NDIA can be lodged:

- by phone on 1800 800 110; and
- by email to feedback@ndis.gov.au.

Complaints to the Commonwealth Ombudsman about the NDIA can be lodged:

- by phone on 1300 362 072; and
- online at www.ombudsman.gov.au.

Staff must support people making a complaint about the NDIA to contact the Agency or Commonwealth Ombudsman, where this is required.

2. Record

The Managing Director must record all information relevant to complaints, in its original and simplest form, in ISP's *Complaints Register*. The *Complaints Register* must be stored in a secure file, accessible only to the Management Team.

3. Acknowledge

The Managing Director must acknowledge receipt of complaints within 2 working days. However, where a person has requested to remain anonymous, contact may not be possible or expected.

In their acknowledgement, the Managing Director must set realistic expectations regarding complaint resolution and refer the matter to other organisations where they are identified as being more suitable to handle it. Acknowledgements must provide timeframes for resolution

where possible.

4. Resolve

Investigation of complaints will not be conducted by a person about whom a complaint has been made, or a person who has a conflict of interest in the matter. If required, the Management Team will determine the appropriate person to undertake the investigation.

In resolving a complaint, the Managing Director must involve the complainant and keep them informed of the progress of the complaint. They must discuss any disparities identified with the complainant and may request additional information when required. A timeframe within which further information is to be provided should be clearly communicated with the complainant.

The Managing Director should consider granting extensions where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant with an explanation of the need.

Complaint investigation must focus on the identified complaint matters only. All parties involved in a complaint must be provided with procedural fairness and with the support and information necessary to participate in the complaints process.

All decisions or actions regarding complaint investigation must be recorded by the Managing Director in ISP's *Complaints Register*.

5. Communicate Resolution

ISP will respond to all complaints as soon as possible and within 28 days from acknowledgement.

If a complaint cannot be responded to in full within 28 days of acknowledgement, an update must be issued to the complainant. The update must 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 should discuss the outcome of a complaint investigation verbally with the complainant, where possible. This must be followed by written advice that provides the complainant an opportunity to make further contact with the Managing Director if required.

The written advice must also include information on what further action may be available to the complainant at the conclusion of the complaint investigation. This may include escalating the matter further with an external agency or seeking a further review within the business. Written advice should also seek feedback from the complainant regarding their experience of the complaints process.

Support must be provided to assist complainants' understanding of correspondence regarding complaints, where this is required (e.g. interpreters, referral to advocates, etc.).

Options for responding to a complaint may include, but are not limited to:

- explaining processes;
- rectifying an issue;
- providing an apology;
- ongoing monitoring; and

- training or educating staff.

Once resolved, complaint outcomes must be relayed to the appropriate area within ISP in order to improve service delivery.

Feedback and Complaint Review

Feedback and complaint review includes identifying, monitoring and acting upon trends and systemic issues identified through the analysis of feedback and complaint information.

The purpose of analysing feedback and complaint data is to learn from patterns in order to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of individual participants, as well as improve the quality of supports.

The *Complaints Register* must be reviewed at monthly Management Team meetings. The Managing Director is responsible for monitoring the *Complaints Register* in order to analyse and report on trends.

Reviews should consider:

- the causes, handling and outcomes of feedback and complaints;
- processes, timeframes and record keeping practices associated with feedback and complaint management; and
- feedback provided by staff and participants about ISP's feedback and complaint management.

Where preventative or improvement measures are identified, these must be tracked in the *Continuous Improvement Register*.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Feedback and Complaints Form*
- *Complaints Register*
- *Continuous Improvement Register*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*
- *Information Management Policy and Procedure*

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, participant and other stakeholder feedback.

ISP's feedback collection mechanisms, such as staff and participant satisfaction surveys, will assess:

- satisfaction with ISP's feedback and complaints processes;
- whether stakeholders have received adequate information about making complaints and their awareness of complaints mechanisms;
- the extent to which participants 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.

ISP's *Continuous Improvement Register* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of ISP's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Endorsement Date:

Last Review Date:

Next Review Date:

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