

POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY NAME	COMPLIMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK
POLICY TYPE	Governance
PURPOSE	To provide clear guidelines to staff and volunteers responding to all compliments, suggestions, complaints and feedback.
SCOPE	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <p>a) All NCS staff and volunteers to provide clear guidelines and processes when responding to complaints;</p> <p>b) All NCS clients and/or their carers, parents, guardians, external stakeholders and members of the public for their information when providing compliments, suggestions and feedback or wishing to lodge a complaint; and</p> <p>c) External advocates, case managers, agencies and service providers for the purpose of advising a NCS client who wishes to lodge a complaint.</p>
DEFINITIONS	<p>NCS Northside Community Service Limited.</p> <p>Client An individual, also known as a consumer, service user or care recipient.</p> <p>Advocate A person who represents and works with an individual or group of people who may need support and encouragement to exercise their rights, in order to ensure that their rights are upheld</p> <p>Informal Complaint is more a formal comment, recommendation or smaller issue that does not require a response, e.g. someone just wants to air a concern and ensure that a member of staff is aware of the issue and that it is brought to the attention of the Manager, Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, with all parties in agreement and satisfied with the outcome.</p> <p>Formal Complaint is an issue that is not resolved at the first point of contact, and needs further investigation. A Complaints Investigation Form must be completed by the appropriate Manager, Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer for action.</p>
POLICY	NCS values compliments, suggestions and feedback and supports the right of individuals to raise any problems, concerns or complaints that they may have regarding NCS facilities, services, personnel, policies, procedures or practices. NCS is committed to promptly and fairly resolving such issues in a conciliatory, non-threatening, respectful and confidential manner.

Review Date	Version Number	Responsible Officer	Authorising Officer	Policy Review Due Date
July 2011	2.0	Continuous Improvement Coordinator	Executive Director, People & Service Development	July 2014

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Compliments and Feedback

- 1) All compliments and feedback received verbally or in writing in relation to a staff member, volunteer, program, service or any other aspect of NCS operations will be entered into the electronic Compliments, Suggestions, Complaints and Feedback Tool located on each staff members desktop computer; and
- 2) On completion of entering information into the electronic tool, the staff member receiving and documenting the compliment and feedback will provide the compliment to the relevant individual, and advise the relevant manager of the compliment.

Informal Complaints

- 1) All informal complaints received (that do not require a formal response) regarding a staff member, volunteer, program, service or any other aspect of NCS operations will be entered into the electronic Compliments, Suggestions, Complaints and Feedback Tool located on each staff members desktop computer;
- 2) On completion of entering information into the electronic tool, the staff member receiving and documenting the informal complaint will provide details to the relevant manager;
- 3) As informal complaints generally require no investigation or follow up, the Manager, Executive Director or CEO should address as appropriate i.e speak with relevant staff if the matter is in relation to a performance issue or through quality or service improvement measures; and
- 4) Where an informal complaint is received from a NCS client, and where deemed appropriate, the relevant manager will make a file note of the informal complaint on the client hard or electronic file.

Formal Complaints

- 1) All formal complaints received (where an investigation is required) regarding a staff member, volunteer, program, service or any other aspect of NCS operations will be entered into the electronic Compliments, Suggestions, Complaints and Feedback Tool located on each staff members desktop computer;
- 2) On receipt of a formal complaint, the Manager, Executive Director or CEO will be made aware of the complaint immediately;
- 3) The individual lodging a formal complaint will be informed of the process and provided a copy of the Compliments, Suggestions, Complaints & Feedback Policy if requested;
- 4) A **Complaints Investigation Form** will be completed by the relevant Manager, Executive Director or CEO to enable prompt and satisfactory investigation;
- 5) Where a formal complaint pertains to the CEO, this will be directed to the President of the NCS Board;

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- 6) If the formal complaint remains unresolved as a result of the outcome by the relevant Manager, the matter will be forwarded to the relevant executive director;
- 7) If the formal complaint remains unresolved as a result of the outcome by the relevant executive director, the matter will be forwarded to the CEO or President of the NCS Board;
- 8) If the formal complaint continues unresolved as a result of the outcome by the CEO or President of the NCS Board, the matter will be referred to a relevant external advocacy service;
- 9) Once a formal complaint has been investigated and the matter resolved, the outcome will be confirmed in writing and forwarded to the Complainant. The outcome will also be recorded on the Complaints Investigation Form;
- 10) The general nature of the formal complaint, where appropriate, will be documented on service and continuous improvement plans to enable the organisation to address as part of its commitment to quality improvement; and
- 11) All formal complaints that have been documented and actioned will be filed in the central 'Formal Complaints Folder' located with the Quality Improvement Coordinator. Where the formal complaint relates to a NCS client, the Quality Improvement Coordinator will forward copies of the Complaints Investigation Form and relevant documentation to the Manager for filing on the clients' electronic or hard copy file.

NCS commitment to the resolution of Formal Complaints

- a) The process for resolving complaints will be open, honest, fair and confidential;
- b) Any individual or group who has a grievance relating to NCS has the right to complain, and to have their concerns resolved, and will be encouraged and supported to attempt to informally resolve the issue directly with the person concerned;
- c) Any individual or group may seek the assistance of another person in lodging their complaint. At all times during the resolution of their complaint they have the right to the assistance and support of an advocate (including an advocacy agency) of their choice. For further information and options around advocacy, please refer to the Advocacy Policy;
- d) Acknowledgement of a formal complaint will be made within three working days of receipt; and
- e) A response to a formal complaint will be made within 21 days; however complaints of a serious or criminal nature (such as abuse or gross misconduct) will be actioned immediately. If the investigation and resolution is likely to extend beyond 21 days, the complainant will be advised in writing as to the cause of the delay and a new response deadline set.

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	<p>Confidentiality of Data Collected</p> <p>a) NCS will capture all Compliments, Suggestions, Complaints and Feedback in the electronic collection tool. Data will only be made available to the CEO, Executive Directors and Managers for the purpose of funding body, service agreement, auditing, accreditation requirements, service planning, and as part of NCS overall quality and continuous improvement processes.</p>
<p>RELATED DOCUMENTS & ATTACHMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Program Guidelines for the HACCC Program 2007 • Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1992 • Disability Service Act (ACT) 1991 • Disability Services Act (Commonwealth) 1986 • Home and Community Care Act (Commonwealth) 1985 • National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc – Quality Improvement and Accreditation System • Community Care Common Standards 2011 • Freedom of Information Act (ACT) 1989 • Access & Equity Policy • Advocacy Policy • Confidentiality & Records Policy • Privacy Policy • Withdrawal of Service Policy • Complaints Investigation Form <p>Related Standards</p> <p>Community Care Common Standards 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 Continuous Improvement • 3.3 Complaints and Service User Feedback

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