

1. Purpose and Objective

This procedure provides guidance for AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) clients and other *interested parties who may seek to provide us with feedback, raise an issue or concern, make a complaint, or provide a compliment to or about us, regarding our services.

The objective is intended to ensure that we handle complaints and feedback fairly, efficiently and effectively to satisfactory resolution within a reasonable timeframe, and that appropriate actions are taken to improve our services, policies or processes where possible.

*Interested parties could include the public, children who attend our service, their parents, carers, family, friends, workers, advocates or agencies who provide support, community visitors, or 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.

Further information about our policy can be found in the Feedback Complaints Management Resolution Policy .

3. How to provide feedback

3.1 Tell us about your concern or complaint, or share a compliment with us

People have the right to complain and provide feedback to us about our service and we encourage people to tell us when we are doing things well and when things could be improved. We do our best to provide high quality service to our clients but recognise that issues can sometimes occur. If you or another person has a concern about AEIOU services, it is important to tell us about it. Complaints and feedback are important—they can help us to improve what we do.

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

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

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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:

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- 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.

3.1.3 Who can make a complaint?

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

3.1.4 How can feedback, a complaint or compliment reach us?

Let us know:

- In person
- By phone, contact your local AEIOU centre, or Central Office - <https://aeiou.org.au/contact>
- Website Online form - <https://aeiou.org.au/feedback>
- Using the paper copy Compliments, Complaints and Feedback form available at our centres
- In writing addressed to the Designated Complaints Officer Email - info@aeiou.org.au , or
- Post - PO Box 107, Spring Hill Qld 4004
- 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 for us 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**.

3.1.5 Support to make a complaint

We 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

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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
- Provide complainants with access to our Feedback, Complaints Management Resolution Framework Policy and Feedback Complaints Resolution Procedure
- We inform complainants how a complaint may be raised with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commissioner and give appropriate support and assistance to contact them
- We provide a list of useful contacts to access agencies about complaints and support
- We acknowledge Whistle Blower Protection legislation and protections in place for people that seek to disclose certain types of information. Report any knowledge of fraudulent, corrupt, unlawful or unethical activity to Stopline, an external whistleblowing body.

4. Responding to a complaint

When we respond to a complaint, our staff will act in accordance with complaint handling procedures and other documents providing guidance on the management of complaints, including relevant legislation and regulations.

The five key stages we follow in responding to a complaint 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 Register - Complaints and Issues Feedback.

The complaint record will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint (unless anonymous) 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.

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 Register – Complaints and Issues Feedback. We regularly analyse this information to identify emerging or systemic issues, patterns in feedback, types of issues, improvement opportunities, 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.

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4.3 Assess and investigate

4.3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making the 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 an investigation or resolution requires the involvement and reporting to other government agencies or other organisations.

4.3.2 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

4.5.1 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, and activities for continual quality improvement planning
- All records relating to the complaint, including emails, correspondence, reports, statements and other related materials are stored with the file and the Register - Complaints and Issues Feedback is updated to close the complaint.

4.5.2 Analyse data

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

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5. Further Information

5.1 Record keeping, privacy and confidentiality requirements

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 within our Register - Complaints and Issues Feedback and related files.

There are circumstances where exceptions apply and workers may disclose information about a person that can be without consent (incl. child's parent/guardian). We have mandatory reporting obligations on child protection matters, and obligations to report suspected or actual incidences of violence, exploitation, neglect abuse, and sexual misconduct to authorities and police. Such matters are classified as 'Reportable Serious Incidents'.

5.2 Related documents

Related documents include:

- POL5.0 Feedback, Complaints Management Resolution Policy Framework
- PRO5.01 Feedback, Complaint and Resolution Client Procedure
- PRO5.02 Implementing Procedural Fairness Guidelines
- F5.01A Chronology of Events Form
- F5.01B Complaint Investigation Report
- F5.01C Complaints, Compliments, Feedback Form
- F5.01D Complaints Acknowledgement Letter Template
- F5.01E Complaints Closure Letter Template
- Register – Complaints and Issues Feedback
- Register – Positive Feedback Compliments
- PRO1.63 Continual Improvement Procedure
- F1.63A Service Improvement Request
- Register – Quality Improvements
- POLQF1.4 Incidents and Reportable Incidents Management Plan
- F1.4.1A Incident Report Form
- F1.4.1B Serious Incident Investigation Report Form
- Register – Reportable Serious Incidents
- POLQF4.1 Child Protection Risk Management Strategy Policy
- POLQF4.2 Child Safe Code of Conduct
- PRO4.1 Identifying and Responding to Child Protection Concerns Procedure
- F4.4.1B Alleged or Actual Sexual or Physical Assault, Abuse or Neglect of a Child Form
- POL5.1 Whistleblower Policy

5.3 Document management and review

The organisation shall review, amend and/or update this document from time to time. Documents are subject to scheduled reviews and maintained in accordance with the **Documentation, Data and Record Control Procedure** (PRO1.31), **Quality Management System Policy** (POL1.6) and **Continual Improvement Procedure** (PRO1.63).

Document owners and reviewers consult with interested parties where required and follow quality assurance approval processes. The controlled document history is captured in the Document Control Centre, Sharepoint and the Document Control Centre (DCC) Archives.

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5.4 Contacts information

A list of useful contacts that can assist with complaints and support are provided.

Organisation	Contact details	Requirement
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/contact-us/makeacomplaint National Relay Service: ask for 1800 035 544.	Complaint's overseen by the Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS services or supports not provided in a safe and respectful way • NDIS services and supports not delivered to an appropriate standard • How an NDIS provider has managed a complaint about services or supports provided.
NDIA National Disability Insurance Agency	https://www.ndis.gov.au/ Online form Email to feedback@ndis.gov.au Phone: 1800 800 110	For complaints about NDIS Plans and the NDIA itself.
Commonwealth Ombudsman	https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints Online form Phone: 1300 362 072 Phone access indigenous people: 1800 060 789	For complaints about the NDIA or NDIS Commission and complaints about other Commonwealth Government departments and agencies.
Independent Advocacy Agencies	The Disability Advocacy Finder: https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/ Ask Izzy - https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder	To find an independent advocacy agency in your area. AEIOU can 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.
Disability Gateway	https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/	Information and services to help people with disability, their family, friends and carers, to find support they need in Australia.
TIS – Translating and Interpreting Service, Department of Home Affairs	https://www.tisnational.gov.au/ Phone: 1300 575 847 Email: tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au Immediate phone interpreting (24/7) Phone: 131 450 (within Australia) and ask for an interpreter to contact us on 07 3320 7500.	Free Interpreter services Help for non-English speakers
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 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 national regulator of the voluntary sector, including charities and not for profits.
Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/ Phone: 137 468 TTY: 133 677 SMS: 0423 677 767	For information about disability services in Qld, the NDIS and Restrictive Practices Review / Positive Behaviour Support and Preventing and Responding to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation and Worker Screening.
Queensland Ombudsman	https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au Phone: (07) 3005 7000	For complaints about Qld Government departments or agencies.

Education & Standards Board of South Australia (SA)	https://www.esb.sa.gov.au/early-childhood Phone: 08 8226 0077 Email: educationstandardsboard@sa.gov.au	The SA state government authority responsible for regulating early childhood services and schools under the National Quality Framework, National Quality Standard and National Law. Report for serious incidents in place through the NQAITS. Can investigate complaints about the provider.
Restrictive Practices Authorisation Scheme (SA)	https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/care-and-support/disability/restrictive-practices Phone: 1800 862 004 Email: DHSRestrictivePracticesUnit@sa.gov.au	The restrictive practice authorisation scheme sets out roles, processes and criteria for restrictive practices authorisation by NDIS service providers for participants in SA. Feedback, complaints, or appeals can be lodged about the scheme.
Department of Education - Early Childhood Education and Care (QLD)	https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/ Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68) Email: eccec@qed.qld.gov.au	For information about the Early Childhood Education and Care Services. In Qld AEIOU are out of scope of the NQF but operate under the Education and Care Service Act 2013. Report for serious incidents in place. Can investigate complaints about the provider.
Children's Education and Care Assurance, Early Childhood Policy and Regulation, Education Directorate, ACT Government. (ACT)	Website: www.education.act.gov.au Phone: (02) 6207 1114 Email: ceca@act.gov.au , or complaintsCECA@act.gov.au	The ACT state government authority responsible for regulating early childhood services and schools under the National Quality Framework. Report for serious incidents in place through the NQAITS. Can investigate complaints about the provider.
Office of the Senior Practitioner (ACT)	https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/quality-complaints-and-regulation/office-of-the-senior-practitioner Phone: (02) 6205 2811 Email: actseniorpractitioner@act.gov.au	The ACT regulates the use of restrictive practices by persons or other entities who provide education (including education and care), disability, and care and protection of children. The Senior Practitioner can receive complaints about providers in relation to positive behaviour support plans that permit the use of a restrictive practice or about such use, conduct investigations and issue a direction.
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 discrimination, human rights, 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. Each state/territory agency to report to is listed.
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	