



Complaints Management

Comments, Complaints, Feedback Handling and Management Policy:

POLICY STATEMENT:

The purpose of this policy is to deliver a high-quality feedback and complaints management service within ACT to facilitate a harmonious outcome for all involved.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to:

- National Employees
- National Associates - including NDIS participants, board members, directors, volunteers, trainees/students, suppliers and subcontracted service providers

POLICY:

National welcomes and values complaints and recognises that a strong commitment to responding to and resolving complaints allows client/participants, stakeholders and employees to contribute to the improvement of the services it delivers.

Each person is encouraged and supported to make a complaint in a way that is comfortable for them, their family, and carer or advocate so that services and supports better meet their needs, expectations and outcomes.

Properly handled complaints about our work are important to our performance. Complaints which are not promptly resolved or responded to can generate unwarranted work and impact heavily on staff morale and service to participants. Complaints also give us ideas for changing the way we work, deliver services and develop policies, aiming to constantly be evolving.

We understand that some complaints will involve multiple parties or interests; such as parents, carers, participants or community organisations. In these circumstances, although it may not be possible to meet everyone's expectations, the principles outlined in this platform will apply a "participant centred approach" to ensure an appropriate outcome is achieved.

Our Responsibilities and Commitment:

Committed to providing and delivering high quality services to all members of the Canberra community and surrounding regions. The central feature of Strategic Plan is Participation. This is reflected in the way National manages and handles complaints. Participation includes any feedback about any aspect of the services that we provide or the way we provide them. Let National know if you feel:

- We have done something well
- We have made a mistake
- We have treated you badly or unfairly
- We have made a wrong decision
- We can do something better or differently

Client/Participant Responsibilities:

- Ensure you are aware of processes of lodging complaints, feedback, incidents and/or concerns. This is addressed during the Welcome Pack process.
- Understand my rights and responsibilities
- Understand, in the event the issue raised is of a mandatory reporting nature, National will proceed with this process accordingly.



Employees Responsibilities:

- Employees are required acknowledge any concerns or complaints a client/participant may relay to them and have a duty to report such concerns directly to National the same day.
- In the event, the client/participant is of serious nature, we ask the employee prompt the client/participant to contact National directly also.
- National may request an incident report from the employee, depending on the nature of the concern/complaint.
- Employee is to understand their responsibilities regarding mandatory reporting incidents and implement appropriate client/participant confidentiality. This means carer is not to further discuss the issue with others.

National Responsibilities:

- Ensure employees are aware of processes of dealing with client/participant concerns when raised with employee directly. This is addressed during induction onboarding process.
- To have effective and proportionate internal complaint management and resolution arrangements in place
- Make sure that client/participants and their representatives know and understand how to contact National to advise of a complaint and or feedback.
- Listen to what the client/participant and their representative have to say
- Do our best to understand stated concerns or issues
- Investigate those concerns in procedural fairness and impartial manner
- Do our best to resolve the issue or fix the problem, although this may not always be possible
- Acknowledge any mistakes or errors we may have made
- Provide clear explanation for all our decisions unless limited by law
- Provide avenues for the client/participant to pursue action within NDIS, Human Rights Commission, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and/or Fair Work ACT.
- Ensure mandatory reporting is completed promptly and appropriate channels listed in Mandatory Reporting Policy at to be notified immediately. Refer to National Community Care Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Process for informing National of complaints, feedback, allegations and incidents:

- Verbal notification to either the clinical coordinator or the managing director of National Community Care.
- Written notification via email, or letter.
- Utilising the suggestion boxes within SIL properties written on National's compliments and complaint form.
- Compliments and Complaints fact sheets available through National website.

Complaints Handling Process

- Upon receiving a complaint, clinical coordinator, and director of National are to be notified immediately.
- National will log the complaint in the complaints register.
- National will issue a formal acknowledgement of the complaint within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.
- National will investigate the complaint and provide a formal communication within 14 days stating the outcome of the complaint and actions/ steps taken to resolve the complaint.
- National will seek feedback from the complainant post investigation letter, any follow up items will be logged as continuous improvement action.
- Any risks identified from the complaint will be addressed and identified within the NCC Risk Register.



STANDARDS:

Committed to providing a high-quality response to complaints regardless of whom the complainant is, what the complaint is about or where and how the complaint is made. The following standards will guide the response, handling and management of all complaints brought to the attention on National.

- Respect- all complaints will be received respectfully
- Timely- All complaints will be acknowledged and managed within reasonable timeframes
- Transparency- All decisions will be explained in clear simple language (except where this may be restricted by law)
- Natural Justice- All complaints will be afforded the principles of natural justice

What National expects of a complainant:

- They talk to our staff respectfully
- They provide as much information about the complaint as possible
- They let us know of any special needs or if extra help is needed in understanding or accessing our complaints service
- Understand that if the incident falls within the scope of a reportable incident, the concern will be escalated accordingly.