

Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy is to outline the requirements for the collection, recording, reporting and management of compliments, complaints and feedback relating to all services operated by Youth Focus.

The policy promotes efficient complaints management that seeks the best possible outcomes for young people, services, and staff.

Objectives

Youth Focus is committed to providing high-quality mental health care and support to young people. We understand that sometimes concerns or complaints may arise, and we value the input of young people and their families in helping us improve our services.

This Policy is designed to ensure that the voices of young people and their family and carers are heard, and their concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all Youth Focus services.

Policy

Youth Focus' feedback management principles are guided by the National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations and the [Australian Open Disclosure Framework](#).

Definitions

Compliment	A compliment is any expression of satisfaction around the service delivered by a staff member, program or service/agency as a whole.
Complaint	A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern raised by a service user, their carer or family, or a member of the public regarding the services provided, or the care and treatment received, whether the issue is perceived or real. Complaints can relate to any aspect of care or service, including administrative processes, communication, or conduct of staff.
Complainant	A complainant is any individual or entity who makes a complaint. This can include the service user, carers, family

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 1



	members, or other stakeholders who feel dissatisfied with the services or care provided.
Open disclosure	Open disclosure is the practice of openly communicating about an adverse event or complaint that has led to harm or potential harm. It involves acknowledging the issue, explaining what happened, apologising where appropriate, and discussing what will be done to prevent it from happening again. The goal is to maintain transparency and build trust. Open disclosure should be discussed with Service Excellence and the Chief Operating Officer. Legal advice may also be sought.
Adverse event or incident	An adverse event is an incident or occurrence that results in unintended harm or injury to a service user, their carer or family which may be the subject of a complaint. This harm could be physical, psychological, or emotional and may be a direct result of a service failure, error, or misunderstanding.
Investigation	Investigation is the process by which the complaint is thoroughly examined. It involves gathering facts, speaking to relevant staff members or witnesses, reviewing records, and determining the underlying cause(s) of the complaint. The aim is to identify whether there was a service failure, and if so, what can be done to address the issue.
Corrective Action	Corrective action refers to the measures taken to fix the issue identified in the complaint and prevent a recurrence. This could include changes to policies, staff training, improved procedures, or adjustments in service delivery.
Feedback	Feedback is any information, comment, or suggestion from a complainant regarding their experience with the complaint process or the resolution. Feedback can help organizations assess how well the complaint process is working and whether there are areas for improvement.
Privacy and Confidentiality	Privacy and confidentiality refer to the obligation to protect the personal and sensitive information shared by a complainant. Information should only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation or resolution of the complaint and must be handled according to legal and ethical standards.

Feedback Management Principles

Accessibility and Awareness:

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 2



- a. Youth Focus will ensure that information about our complaints management process is readily accessible to young people and their families, including clear and simple explanations in youth-friendly language.
- b. Information about how to provide feedback will be available on our website, in our facilities, and in all relevant service materials.
- c. Youth Focus will seek to proactively advise young people, carers and families about their rights and the complaint process at the commencement of service.
- d. Governing bodies, including headspace National, will be notified of complaints as required by relevant agreements. Further information is set out in the Incident Reporting and Management Policy.

Confidentiality

- a. Youth Focus will maintain strict confidentiality throughout the complaints handling process, ensuring the privacy and dignity of all people involved, in accordance with the Youth Focus Privacy, Confidentiality, Access and Release of Information Policy
- b. Information about complaints will not be documented within a young person’s MME file, in order to limit any impact on their ability to access services.
- c. All information related to complaints will be handled in accordance with relevant privacy laws and regulations.
- d. Pathways will be provided for anonymous feedback channels to support complainants to engage with the policy, should being identifiable cause barrier to engaging.

Ease of Submission:

- a. Youth Focus will accept feedback through any channel, based on the preference of the young person or family member including in-person, phone, email, and an online portal.
- b. Young people, carers and family can submit complaints anonymously if they wish, with the understanding that providing contact information can help us follow up and resolve issues more effectively.

Timely Responses:

- a. Youth Focus commit to acknowledging all complaints within 5 working days of receipt.
- b. An update will be provided to the complainant and any relevant carers and family within 10 working days of acknowledgement.
- c. Youth Focus will endeavour to resolve complaints within 30 days. It’s understood that more complex issues may take longer. In such cases, the complainant will be informed of progress at two-week intervals.
- d. All adverse events should be acknowledged and discussed with the young person as part of open disclosure, as soon as practical. Discussions should include family and carers for young people under the age of 18. If young people are 18 or older, or have been assessed as a mature minor, consent must be obtained prior to discussing details of the adverse event with family and carers.
- e. Open disclosure should be discussed with Service Excellence and the Chief Operating Officer. Legal advice may also be sought.

Youth and Carer Involvement:

- a. Youth Focus encourage young people to be directly involved in the resolution process. THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 3



- b. Young people may choose to have a trusted advocate, support person and or family member assist them in the process.
- c. Youth Focus will involve young people, families, and carers in the review of complaints through governance channels.

Fair and Impartial Handling:

- a. Complaints will be handled by individuals who were not directly involved in the matter which is the subject of feedback.
- b. Youth Focus will conduct a fair and impartial investigation into complaints, including gathering supporting information and interviewing relevant parties.
- c. Pending the nature of a complaint, Youth Focus may engage third-party experts, stakeholders, regulatory or judicial bodies to support investigation, assessment, and resolution.
- d. Whistleblower protections identified within the Whistleblower policy apply where appropriate.
- e. The young person, their family and carers (with consent) can expect to be:
 - fully informed of the facts surrounding an adverse event and its consequences
 - treated with empathy, respect and consideration
 - supported in a manner appropriate to their needs.

Resolution and Follow-Up:

- a. Once a resolution is reached, Youth Focus will communicate the outcome to the complainant in a clear and accessible manner.
- b. Youth Focus will implement any necessary corrective actions to prevent similar issues from arising in the future.
- c. Youth Focus will provide clear information on how to escalate concerns if complainants are dissatisfied with processes or resolutions communicated to them.
- d. Where applicable, the young person, their family and carers (with consent) will receive an apology or expression of regret for any harm that resulted from an adverse event. An apology or expression of regret should include the words 'I am sorry' or 'we are sorry', but must not contain speculative statements, admission of liability or apportioning of blame.
- e. Open disclosure should be discussed with Service Excellence and the Chief Operating Officer. Legal advice may also be sought.

Record Keeping:

- a. All complaints and their resolutions will be documented and securely stored for reference and analysis.
- b. The information obtained about incidents from the open disclosure process will be incorporated into quality improvement, via submission of key learnings to the CQI Register.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

- a. Youth Focus will use feedback from complaints to identify areas for improvement in its services and policies.

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 4



- b. Periodic reviews of the Youth Focus complaints management process will be conducted to ensure its effectiveness.
- c. A summary of all feedback will be provided on a monthly basis to the Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Working Group for review and consideration.
- d. Youth Focus is responsible for creating an environment in which all staff are
 - encouraged and able to recognise and report adverse events
 - prepared through training and education to participate in open disclosure
 - supported through the open disclosure process.

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 5



Review & Responsibility

POLICY SPONSOR	Service Excellence Manager
INITIAL ENDORSEMENT	04/06/2019
LAST REVIEWED	12/01/2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE	12/01/2027

Related Documents

	Incident Reporting and Management Policy
	headspace Centres Serious Incidents and Complaints Reporting Policy - headspace National Office 2019
POLICIES/ PROCEDURES	Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Procedure
	Effective handling of complaints made to your organisation - An Overview, WA Ombudsman 2017
	“National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, Second Edition” Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care 2018 AS ISO 10002 – 2006 Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations
	“Are You Listening? Guidelines for making complaints processes accessible and responsive to children and young people”. Commissioner for Children and Young People WA
	Complaints Management Toolkit, Guideline and Policy, WA Health
	National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations (2022)
GUIDELINES	Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2024) Australian Open Disclosure Framework
FORMS	Nil
	Mental Health Act 2014
LEGISLATION	Privacy Act 1998

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED. Please refer to the CDMS for currency

Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Jane Withers
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 6

