

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, their family and carers, delivery of services, and staff. Information gathered through compliments, complaints and feedback, helps to inform continuous quality and safety improvements.

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.

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 1



Complainant	A complainant is any individual or entity who makes a complaint. This can include the service user, carers, family 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 that has led to or caused 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.
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.

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 2



Feedback Management Principles

Accessibility and Awareness:

- 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.
- e. Youth Focus will provide information to young people, their families and carers about how to access relevant external complaints processes.

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 (health record), 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 are provided for submitting anonymous feedback, should being identifiable cause a barrier to engaging in feedback channels.

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 online portals.
- 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 will acknowledge all complaints within 5 working days of receipt where feedback is not anonymous.
- 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.

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 3



Youth and Carer Involvement:

- a. Youth Focus encourage young people to be directly involved in the resolution process.
- 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. This includes review of de-identified feedback for service improvement by young people and carer representatives of the Youth Focus Quality Safety and Clinical Governance sub-committee of the Board.

Fair and Impartial Handling:

- a. Complaints will be reviewed and managed by an appropriate staff member who has not been directly involved in the matter that the complaint relates to.
- b. Youth Focus will conduct a fair and impartial investigation into complaints, which may include 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. 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 (open disclosure)
 - 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 appropriate, the young person, their family and carers should receive an apology or expression of regret for any harm or potential harm that has resulted.

Record Keeping:

- a. All complaints and their resolutions will be documented and securely stored for reference and analysis.
- b. All compliments, complaints and feedback are reported (de-identified) to the Youth Focus Quality Safety and Clinical Governance working group (monthly) and sub-committee of the board (bi-monthly) for discussion and review. Young people and carer representatives are involved in the review process via these channels.

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 4



Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

- a. Youth Focus will use feedback from complaints to identify areas for improvement in its services and policies.
- b. Key learnings are captured on a Continuous Quality Improvements Register for review and implementation
- c. Periodic reviews of the Youth Focus complaints management process will be conducted to ensure its effectiveness.

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 5



Review and Responsibility

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

Related Documents

	<p>Youth Focus Incident Reporting and Management Policy</p> <p>headspace Serious Incidents and Complaints Reporting Policy</p>
POLICIES/ PROCEDURES	<p>Youth Focus Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Procedure</p> <p>Effective handling of complaints made to your organisation - An Overview, WA Ombudsman 2017</p> <p>Child friendly complaint processes and reporting – Commissioner for Children and Young People</p> <p>Complaints Management Toolkit, Guideline and Policy, WA Health</p> <p>National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations (2022)</p>
GUIDELINES	Australian Open Disclosure Framework
FORMS	<p>Service Specific Feedback Form</p> <p>Mental Health Act 2014</p>
LEGISLATION	Privacy Act 1998

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Document Name: Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Management Policy	Document Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Document Number: EXC-CLG-POL-0001	Page 6

