
CR2 Client Complaints

Policy context: This policy relates to the following legislation and / or standard(s):	
Relevant International, National or State Standard	Human Services Quality Standards: Standard 5 – Feedback, complaints and appeals ; Indicator 5.1.
Legislation or other requirements	Nil

PURPOSE

Eating Disorders Queensland (EDQ) recognises and values the importance of complaints as a means of improving the way it delivers services. EDQ is committed to:

- Ensuring the complaints process is made available and accessible to all stakeholders
- Following principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and transparency when responding and resolving all complaints
- Providing a confidential, safe and culturally sensitive environment for stakeholders to raise and have their complaints heard and resolved
- Supporting clients who choose to seek additional supports and services when making a complaint
- Respectfully listening to and working with all stakeholders
- Ensuring complaints are resolved within the time frames outlined in this Procedure.

SCOPE

This policy applies to

- People using EDQ services
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Students
- Contracted / brokered services
- Board members

RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual staff members: All efforts should be made to try and resolve the complaint as promptly and simply as possible i.e. the person who initially receives the complaint should attempt to resolve it. This must be conducted by a EDQ employee who has the delegated authority as outlined in their position description.

General Manager: Coordinate investigation and resolution of complaints that are unable to be resolved at the first level. This includes regular and timely communication with the complainant as guided by the timeframes below.

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- Advises the Board of all complaints
 - Interview all relevant parties
 - Ensures any procedural changes arising from complaints are followed up, and procedural documents amended accordingly.

Board: Hears complaints directed against the General Manager. Hears appeals and makes decision on these appeals. These decisions are limited to:

- Uphold original decision
- Send the appeal back to the General Manager with recommendation(s) for resolution

PROCEDURES

A *Feedback and Complaints Form* will be made available to the individual to lodge their grievance, however it is not mandatory that they use the form. The *Feedback and Complaints Form* can be used to make anonymous complaints.

Grievances can be lodged:

- directly with a staff member, either verbally or by providing a completed Feedback and Complaints Form;
- EDQ's [website](#) (the feedback section through the Contact page)
- by email to: admin@edq.org.au
- by phone on (07) 3844 6055 or
- in writing to the Board

Complaints can also be lodged directly with the Queensland Health Ombusman or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission.

All clients making a complaint will be encouraged to use an advocate of their choice to act on their behalf if they wish. The advocate may be a family member or friend, or sourced (with the assistance of a staff member if required) through the National Disability Advocacy Program.

If a complaint alleges actual or possible criminal activity or abuse or neglect, it will be referred to the Director immediately. The Director will follow the *Incident Management Policy and Procedure*, reporting the complaint and working with the relevant authority to investigate the allegation.

Every staff member has a right to be advised immediately of a complaint against them by a client or other person. Staff members have the right to expect that the complaint will be dealt with promptly, confidentially and in a respectful manner. Staff members will be offered appropriate support, when requested, in the event of a complaint made against them.

Staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure a complainant is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Staff and members of the Board will conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner at all times when dealing with people who may have lodged a complaint.

Complaints / Appeals Training

EDQ will encourage staff to update mediation and conflict resolution skills and participate in training when available by qualified training organisations.

Process to be followed

The following process will be applied when a complaint is received:

Summary	Details
Clients receiving services and all stakeholders are informed of the complaints process	<p>All clients of EDQ will be informed about how to make a complaint about the services they receive upon commencement of services and at any time during service provision.</p> <p>All other persons who wish to make a complaint are also informed of this process.</p>
All complaints received by EDQ are to be documented	<p>Stakeholders may register a complaint in a variety of ways: in person, over the telephone, in writing, or through a formal Complaint form. If submitted verbally, the staff member receiving the complaint will document the points raised and have the client sign-off on them as soon as possible after the conversation.</p> <p>All complaints will be treated professionally and consistently.</p> <p>When the person chooses not to complete the Complaint form and the complaint can be resolved informally, the person receiving the complaint shall either record the details of the complaint on CSNet (if the complainant is a client and there is not sensitive information involved) or on the Complaint form (for non-client complaints or client complaints involving sensitive information). This allows EDQ to track systemic issues and respond accordingly.</p>
Receiving a complaint	<p>The resolution of complaints should involve open negotiation and discussion between the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint has been made. Where such negotiations are possible, EDQ will facilitate this process in the resolution of complaints.</p>
Persons responsible for handling the complaint	<p>When an employee, volunteer or contracted service receives a complaint that is not able to be resolved at their level, it shall be immediately referred to the General Manager.</p> <p>Complaints made against the General Manager will be investigated by an external investigator.</p> <p>The Board should only be utilised as a last resort as they are part of the appeals process and should not be involved at this stage in the complaint.</p> <p>If the complaint is of a serious nature or is about the General Manager, the General Manager will inform the Chairperson of the EDQ Board immediately.</p>
Inform the complainant of their rights when making a	<p>Reassure the complainant that all complaints are treated confidentially, and they will not be vilified or disadvantaged because they have made a complaint. Explain the complaints procedure.</p>

Summary	Details
complaint	<p>Clients have the right to support in resolving a complaint and can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve a family member or friend to assist in resolving the complaint • Choose to use an advocate of their choice (Refer them to appropriate client advocacy services). <p>Service users will also be provided with information regarding translator and / or interpreter services which can assist them in making their complaint.</p>
Confidentiality and seeking information from other parties	<p>The details of a complaint will be kept confidential amongst the people directly concerned with its resolution.</p> <p>Where there is a requirement to share information with other parties in order to resolve the complaint, the person's permission must be obtained before proceeding.</p>
Complaints of a criminal nature	<p>If at any time it becomes apparent complaints are of a criminal nature the complaint shall be immediately referred to the police. This shall be done through the General Manager. If the General Manager is not available or if the complaint relates to the General Manager, this will be completed by the Chairperson of the Board.</p>
Complaints of discrimination or sexual harassment	<p>If the complainant alleges serious discrimination or sexual harassment by an employee or volunteer, the person handling the complaint will advise the complainant that they have the right to lodge a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland (1300 130 670) or the Human Rights Commission National Information Service: (1300 656 419).</p>
When staff or volunteer disciplinary action is required	<p>If a complaint against an employee or volunteer requires disciplinary action, the relevant human resource procedures will be followed.</p>
Complaints about contracted or brokered services	<p>If a complaint is in relation to a contractor work performance refer to the Brokerage / Sub-contracting Agreement. Contact the service provider, advise them of complaint and attempt to achieve resolution.</p>
Acknowledge receipt of written complaints	<p>Step 1: When a complaint is received in writing the person responsible for investigating and resolving the complaint will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two business days.</p>
Investigating and resolving a complaint	<p>Step 2: When investigating a complaint, the person handling the complaint should consider the following questions when deciding what actions are to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of the complaint? • Who is involved?

Summary	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there sufficient information to make a fair judgement about what happened? <p>Step 3: If the person handling the complaint needs additional information beyond what is on the Complaint form, further clarification is to be sought from the complainant or their representative. This additional information shall also be recorded on the Complaint form.</p> <p>The person handling the complaint will decide the course of action based on the information provided.</p> <p>Step 4: The complainant shall be contacted by the person handling the complaint within ten business days to discuss what action is proposed/has been taken and will seek feedback on the complainant's satisfaction with the action. It's a good idea to maintain regular contact with the complainant even if it to report that there is nothing to report.</p> <p>Step 5: If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may request a review of the complaint by the Board. The Board will take all steps possible to address the complaint. The complainant will be kept fully informed of the process towards resolution.</p> <p>If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or grievance, they will be provided with the details of other agencies they can use to assist them to achieve a resolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escalated complaints will be tracked in the <i>Complaints and Grievances Register</i> in the same manner as other complaints and the same communication processes as outlined above will be applied. • Complaints to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission can be lodged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by completing the online form at https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF • by phone on 1800 035 544 <p>Complaints can be made to The Department of Health:</p> <p>https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/compliments-complaints/compliments-complaints-department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go local first: contact the departmental business area, facility or service in question. Talking to the staff member, manager, or an executive of the area is often the easiest and quickest way to resolve the problem. • You can also email the Department Liaison Office DLO@health.qld.gov.au who will direct your complaint to the appropriate area. • or complete an online feedback/enquiry form <p>Complaints can be lodged at the Office of the Health Ombudsman</p>

Summary	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.oho.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/ • Or call 133 646 <p>NDIS participants purchasing products and services also have rights and protections under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), including provisions on client guarantees and unfair contract terms. Consumer Affairs Queensland provides information and advice and, in some cases, dispute resolution services for client disputes under the ACL. See https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/consumer-rights-complaints-and-scams</p> <p>Grievances may also be escalated to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland (Tel: 1300 130 670), the • Human Rights Commission (1300 656 419) • Health Ombudsman (Tel: 133 OHO (133 646))
Follow up	The General Manager or other appropriate employee is to contact the complainant at an identified point following resolution of their issue to ensure that they are satisfied with the actions taken. If they are not happy offer alternative options including advocacy or Alternative Dispute Mediation Service.
Withdrawal of a complaint	The complainant may withdraw the complaint in writing to the General Manager at any time. The General Manager will seek to ensure that the complainant is satisfied with the decision to withdraw the complaint.
Records management	All details of the complaint including investigations, actions taken by the organisation to respond to the complaint and the outcomes must be recorded on the Complaint Form and stored securely in the Complaints file.
Lessons learned and continuous improvement	Knowledge gained through handling of complaints will be used to improve service delivery processes within the organisation through a timely and rigorous review process.

REVIEW PROCESSES

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, particularly after a serious complaint has been managed. Indicators of the policy being successful include:

- Positive feedback from parties involved in the process, including the staff member against whom the complaint was made.
- The review process will also seek participant views on the accessibility of the complaints management and resolution system, and consider this feedback during continuous quality improvement processes.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- Client Handbook or other document containing information on the complaints process and advocacy services
- Statement of Client Rights and Responsibilities
- Feedback form
- Client Complaints Procedure
- Brokerage / Sub-contracting Agreements

OTHER RELEVANT POLICY & PROCEDURES

- CR3 Access and Equity
- CR6 Stakeholder Feedback

Approved: EDQ Board
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This Document is CONTROLLED and is not to be altered without authorisation