



Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Our complaint management system is intended to:

- Enable us to respond to issues raised by people making complaints in a timely and cost-effective way.
- Boost participant confidence in our administrative process.
- Provide information that can be used by us to deliver quality improvements in our services, Staff and complaint handling.

This policy provides guidance to our Staff and participants who wish to make a complaint on the fundamental principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

POLICY

It is the policy of Social Studio to create an environment where complaints and concerns, compliments and suggestions (feedback) are welcomed and viewed as an opportunity for acknowledgement and improvement. This process is to ensure that individuals have the right to make comments and complaints and are encouraged to exercise their right in blame-free and resolution-focused culture; respecting an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.

It is acknowledged that such comments and complaints are vital to review internal performance and processes and to seek continuous improvement of services as we seek to achieve our care commitment. Participants, families, advocates or other stakeholders may submit a Complaints/Feedback Form about Social Studio's supports or services, Staff, and/or contractors.

The participants will be given information in Easy Read Format, if required

It is our policy to follow the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and comply with the requirements under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.



Social Studio maintains that complaints and feedback can be managed effectively through:

- An open and transparent complaint handling system.
- The observation of the principles of natural justice and compliance with relevant mandatory reporting under Australian law.
- The commitment to the right of stakeholders to complain either directly or through their representatives.
- Undertaking procedural fairness to reach a fair and correct decision.
- Taking reasonable steps to inform the complainant of the NDIS Commission Complaints process, including the use of various communication means such as oral and written.
- The maintenance of complete confidentiality and privacy.
- Abiding by the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- Training Staff in the complaint's process and the rights of all stakeholders to complain.
- Complaints being considered seriously and with respect.
- Informing participants and Staff about their rights to complain and guiding them on how to make a complaint during the assessment, orientation processes and in our welcome information.
- The provision of support for those people who may need assistance to make the complaint.
- The protection of complainants against retribution or discrimination.
- The prompt investigation and resolution of complaints.
- Communicating and consulting with participants, family and advocates during the complaint's process and providing feedback and resolutions.
- The consistent interpretation and application of policies and processes.
- The provision of opportunities for all parties to participate in the complaints resolution process.
- The acceptance of the Social Studio and its employees being accountable for actions and decisions are taken as a result of the complaint.
- The commitment to resolve problems at the point of service or through referral to alternatives.
- The commitment to use the complaint as a means of improving the planning, delivery and review of services through our continuous improvement processes.
- Referring complaints and feedback into Continuous Improvement Policy.
- Annually auditing of the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy.

DEFINITION

Complaint - An expression of dissatisfaction or a circumstance regarded as a cause for such expression.



PROCEDURE

Complaint Process

Complaints and suggestions can be made through:

- The utilisation of the Complaint / Feedback Form.
- Contacting a member of staff verbally or in writing. The member of staff must offer to document the complaint on behalf of a participant (if required) and refer the matter to the Director
- Contacting the Director, verbally or in writing.
- Responding to questionnaires and surveys.
- Sending an email to our contact email.
- Via our website
- Attending meetings/care conferences.
- Contacting external complaint's agencies (Such as the NDIS Commission).
- Communicating orally, or in writing, or any other relevant means.

Complaints may be made by:

- Staff
- The participant
- The public
- An advocate
- A family member
- Carers
- Anonymously

Results are recorded in Complaint Register to allow for input into Continuous Improvement processes. The Continuous Improvement Register will be used to record improvements that have been established after the finalisation of the Complaints Management Process.

If a complaint is about:

- Support or services - The complaint will be dealt with by the Director
- A staff member - The complaint will be dealt with by the Director
- The Director - An external person or body may be approached (NDIS Commission Ph: 1800 035 544 - 9 am to 4 pm)



Staff, participants and/or person's responsible, visiting health professionals and

visitors are informed of the complaints process through:

- Welcome Information for Participants.
- Initial access to supports.
- Staff Orientation and training.
- Meetings.
- Participant Agreements.
- Contractor Agreements.

Complaint Management Process

The process and investigation must adhere to the principles of impartiality, privacy, confidentiality, transparency and timeliness. Complaints will not be discussed with anyone who does not have responsibility for resolving the issue. Social Studio must take into consideration any cultural and linguistic needs of the participant and provide the relevant support mechanism such as interpreters or similar.

Stage 1

Acknowledge all complaints quickly (within one (3) working day, where possible).

Stage 2

Review of the Complaint:

1. Consult with the participant regarding the desired outcome.
2. Inform the complainant of support regarding - their right to an advocate, an interpreter, stages of decision-making, mechanisms to protect privacy, ability to complain to the NDIS Commission and progress and outcome.
3. Determine the type of complaint - service, support or process.
4. Notify the complainant of each stage of their complaint.
5. If a meeting is required, then it will be held in a safe environment that has been determined by the complainant and at a time relevant to the participant.
6. Where the complainant is a recipient of disability services under the NDIS, check the participant record for a preferred contact for complaints or ask the participant if they would like to nominate a contact from one of the Social Studio's persons assigned to handle complaints.



Stage 3

Assessing the Complaint:

During the assessment of the complaint, Director or their delegate must prioritise the complaint and determine a resolution pathway (where required). After the pathway has been established, the complaint will be investigated.

Stage 4

Investigation and Decision Process:

1. At the time of lodgement, determine if it is practicable to find an immediate resolution.
2. The Director must keep the complainant informed about the complaint.
3. Consult with the complainant to gather information about the underlying issue.
4. Analyse antecedents and underlying issues in determining a decision.
5. Written responses must be approved by Director before being sent out.
6. Respond to the complainant with a clear decision.

Stage 5

After the Decision:

After investigation and a satisfactory response has been documented the Director will:

1. Inform the complainant of the decision, including the reason for the decision and giving options for reviewing the decision
2. Ensure that the complaint investigation has been satisfactorily completed.
3. Determine if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.
4. Follow-up and consult with complainants about any concerns.
5. Ascertain preventative actions and continuous improvement.
6. Consider if there are any systemic issues.
7. Record the information about the complaint in the Complainant's Register.
8. Record the details of the improvement from the complaint in Continuous Improvement Register, if required.

Complaints resolution will be monitored according to the audit schedule and feedback will be provided to the complainants personally.



Documentation

- All complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Register.
- Information in the register will include:
 - Information about the complaint.
 - Identified issues.
 - Actions are undertaken to resolve the complaint.
 - The outcome of the complaint.
- Upload the documents, including Compliments, Complaint/Feedback forms into the computer system.
- Keep a copy of the information given to complainant in the file.
- Keep all complaint documents for seven (7) years from the day of record.
- Collect statistical and other information to:
 - Review issues raised.
 - Identify and address systematic issues.
 - Report information to the Commissioner if requested by the NDIS Commissioner.
- The Policy review will occur if there are legislative changes or regularly (at least annually).

Unresolved Complaints

Unresolved complaints will be referred to as the Director for investigation and resolution. Should the complaint not be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complaint will be escalated to a person nominated by the complainant (with the complainant's permission).

When complaints cannot be resolved internally, the complainant may be referred to the external agency, listed below;

NDIS Commission

Ph: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677.

Interpreters can be arranged.

National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.

Completing a complaint contact form.

<https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>



RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaint / Feedback Form
- Service Agreement
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Easy Read information
- NDIS Complaint Form

REFERENCES

- Work Health and Safety Act (2011)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
- NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- Privacy Act (1988)