

## Youth Solutions – Consumer Feedback and Complaints

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### 1 Policy statement

The intent of this policy is to illustrate Youth Solutions' commitment to actively seeking the input of service users and stakeholders and to welcome feedback, both positive and negative, to improve service provision and activities.

This policy aims to ensure Youth Solutions:

- fosters a culture that encourages open and honest communication
- informs service users and stakeholders about the standard of service they can expect
- protects the right of service users and stakeholders to provide positive and negative feedback
- encourages and provides easy access to providing feedback
- provides anonymity to service users and stakeholders providing feedback
- records and analyses information arising from feedback
- uses service user and stakeholder feedback to improve services and activities

### 2 Purpose, scope and outcomes

This policy applies to all service users and stakeholders.

This policy applies to all service users and stakeholders wishing to provide feedback including complaints against Youth Solutions, or a representative of Youth Solutions including:

- Board
- staff
- other workers
- volunteers
- student placements
- Youth Advisory Group members

This policy does not apply to internal issues between representatives of Youth Solutions. Please see [Policy – Internal Grievances](#) and [Policy – Disciplinary Action](#) for further information.

This policy also does not apply to complaints made outside work hours or work duties, including personal complaints made about an individual or group of Youth Solutions representatives.

This policy works towards achieving the following outcomes for service users and stakeholders:

- service users and stakeholders are given information about the complaints process
- service users and stakeholders openly communicate positive and negative feedback
- service users and stakeholders are treated with respect and feel valued
- services and activities are continuously improved as a result of feedback
- services and activities are responsive to the varied and changing needs of service users and stakeholders

## 3 Definitions

Please refer to the Policy and Procedure Definitions document, sections 7.1 Outcomes Monitored and 8.2 Consumer Feedback and Complaints, for all definitions.

## 4 Principles

Youth Solutions' consumer feedback and complaints handling process is based on the following elements:

- **People focus**

Youth Solutions is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about its services, systems, practices, procedures and complaint handling.

Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame (as in AS/NZ 10002).

People providing feedback and making complaints will be:

- provided with information about the feedback and complaint handling process and how to access it
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

- **No detriment to people providing feedback or making complaints**

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

- **Accessibility**

Youth Solutions will ensure that information about the complaints and appeals processes is readily available. Youth Solutions will ensure that its systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

The complainant can arrange their own interpreter or Youth Solutions can organise an interpreter at no charge.

- **Early resolution**

Where possible, negative feedback and complaints will be resolved at first contact with Youth Solutions. When appropriate Youth Solutions may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

- **Responsiveness**

Youth Solutions will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

Youth Solutions will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security, the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

- **Objectivity and fairness**

Youth Solutions will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

Youth Solutions will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

- **Confidentiality**

Youth Solutions will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by Youth Solutions as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

- **Continuous improvement**

Youth Solutions are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including the management of the effectiveness and efficiency of the consumer feedback and complaints handling system. To this end, Youth Solutions will:

- implement best practices in complaint handling
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate changes arising out of the analysis of feedback and complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

## 5 Policy detail, action and procedures

### 5.1 Promoting processes

Youth Solutions' complaints and appeals process will be documented for service users and stakeholders in Consumer Feedback and Complaints which is made available:

- in the Youth Solutions office
- on the Youth Solutions website
- in hard copy to the lead contact for services and activities at external organisations
- in soft copy via email (upon request)
- in hard copy via post (upon request)

Consumer Feedback and Complaints contains information on the following:

- how to make a complaint or lodge an appeal
- contact details for lodging a complaint or appeal

# POLICY – CONSUMER FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING

- the process for resolving complaints and appeals
- the rights of the complainant to an advocate, support person and/or interpreter
- how to make a complaint to an external body and relevant contact details

The information is written in plain English and is made available to individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with a disability or with low language, literacy and numeracy levels through those who advocate on their behalf, including but not limited to:

- parents and carers
- the lead contact at the organisation attended by the service user or stakeholder
- legal representatives

Complaints may be made by individual service users and stakeholders during and at completion of services and activities.

## 5.2 Frequency of service user and stakeholder feedback

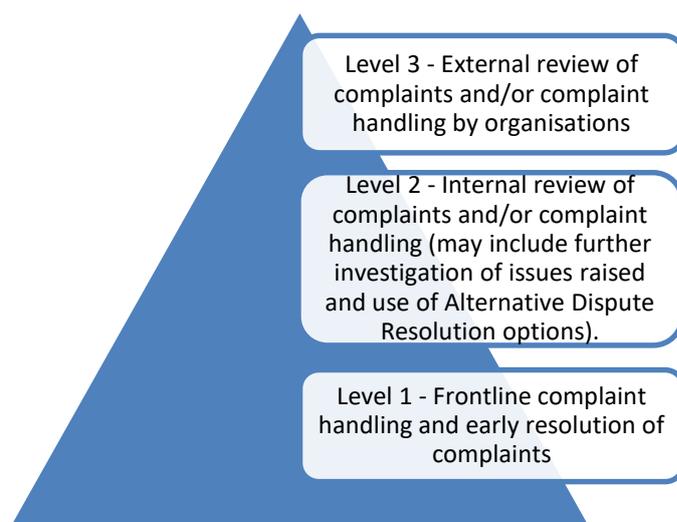
The frequency for service user and stakeholder feedback requested by Youth Solutions is listed in table below.

Type of feedback	Completed by	Frequency	Responsibility
Annual stakeholder survey	Stakeholders	Annually	CEO RDC
Event surveys	Event attendees	Following the completion of an event	All
General feedback and complaints	Service users and/or stakeholders	Ongoing at the discretion of the service user and/or stakeholder	All
Workshops and presentations	Service users and/or stakeholders	Prior to workshop delivery and at the completion of the workshop series or presentation	Program Officers
Testimonials	Service users and/or stakeholders	Ongoing at the discretion of the service user and/or stakeholder	All

## 5.3 Action and Procedures

All staff and the Board must follow Procedure – Consumer Feedback and Complaints Handling for guidance with receiving, recording and actioning feedback and complaints.

Youth Solutions' consumer feedback and complaints handling procedures are modelled on the three tiers of complaint handling as illustrated below:



## 6 Delegations and responsibilities

The Board has a legal obligation to ensure Youth Solutions adheres to the terms outlined in this policy. The Board may choose to delegate day-to-day responsibilities to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate.

Position	Delegation or task
<b>Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the policy</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Comply with the policy</li> <li>• Delegate policy implementation and procedural development to management</li> </ul>
<b>Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the policy</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Delegate policy implementation to management</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<p><b>CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with policy</li> <li>• Endorse associated procedures</li> <li>• Oversee the development and review of the policy and procedures</li> <li>• Manage implementation of the policy and associated procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with the policy and associated procedures</li> <li>• Support continuous quality improvement initiatives relating to the policy and associated procedures</li> <li>• Provide advice and expertise (relative to role) in reviewing the policy and associated procedures</li> </ul>

## 7 Policy implementation

This policy is developed in consultation with all employees and approved by the Board. All employees are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

# POLICY – CONSUMER FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING

This policy will be reviewed annually from the date of its endorsement, unless a review is required earlier by the CEO.

## 8 Risk management

Policies and procedures is a standing agenda item for Youth Solutions staff meetings to discuss any relevant issues.

By implementing this policy, Youth Solutions effectively manages the risk of:

- providing low or no service access
- unintentionally marginalising service users or groups of service users as a result of providing ill-suited services and activities

## 9 Breaches

There are various penalties for breaching policies. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, as per Policy – Disciplinary Action.

## 10 References to external sources

## 11 Other relevant internal policies and documents

- Policy – Complaints Handling
- Policy – Disciplinary Action
- Policy – Internal Grievances
- Policy – Program and Project Evaluation
- Procedure – Program and Project Evaluation
- Register – Complaints
- Register – Consumer Feedback
- Annual Report
- Project Evaluation Plan
- Project Evaluation Report
- Project Report
- Project Summary

## 12 Quality and accreditation standards

### 12.1 Australian Standards Excellence Standards (ASES)

Provided by Quality Innovation Performance (QIP)

#### **Standard C.8.1 – Consumer and Community Engagement**

Client and community feedback

- Youth Solutions collects and uses feedback from its service users and community members when planning, implementing and evaluating services and activities

Client rights

- Youth Solutions protects the rights of clients and ensures that clients are aware of what to expect from the service and of their own rights and responsibilities

Decision making and choice

# POLICY – CONSUMER FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING

- Youth Solutions enables service users to make effective decisions about all elements of the services available for and provided to them

Individual service planning and coordination

- Youth Solutions monitors client outcomes and reviews service plans in line with client needs

Service intake or entry

- Youth Solutions sets the criteria for eligibility for service, provides information to people requiring assistance, assesses requests for service and provides referrals to other services when unable to meet a request for service

## **Standard C.8.2 – Consumer Feedback and Complaints**

Client and community feedback

- Youth Solutions collects and uses feedback from its service users and community members when planning, implementing and evaluating services and activities

Client feedback and complaints

- Youth Solutions follows a documented complaints management procedure that encourages and supports service users and stakeholders to raise concerns and protects them against retribution

## **Standard C.7.1 – Outcomes Monitored**

External accountability

- Youth Solutions reports to its members, funding providers, community and other stakeholders through newsletters and annual reports

Organisational performance monitoring

- Youth Solutions monitors its performance through service and activity outcomes, revenue and expenditure, quarterly reports to funding bodies and the annual report

Service access

- Youth Solutions ensures that its services are accessible and relevant to all people within its target group

## **Document control**

Please note printed this document is uncontrolled when printed.

Policy	<b>Consumer Feedback and Complaints Handling</b>	Effective date	<b>December 2011</b>
Responsibility	<b>CEO or designate</b>	Approved by	<b>Board</b>
		Review date	<b>Refer to register</b>

## **Record of policy review**

Reviewed	Reason for review	Reviewed by	Additional comments
	New policy	Debbie Roberts	
July 2006	Due for review	Debbie Roberts	
July 2009	Preparation for external review	Debbie Roberts	
December 2011	Preparation for external review	Dan Lea	
December 2012	Due for review	Geraldine Dean	
January 2014	Due for review	Lauren Ognenovski	
March 2015	Preparation for external review	Lauren Ognenovski	Name of policy changed from <u>Policy – Community Stakeholder Consultation</u> to reflect new ASES standards
April 2018	Due for review	Emily Deans	
February 2019	Audit action item from OCM Report	Karen Yuen	Contains contents from archived <u>Policy – Complaints Handling</u> and <u>Policy – Service User and Stakeholder Feedback</u>