

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Introduction

- 1) SANDBAG welcomes complaints and feedback as opportunities to continuously evaluate and improve our activities. We will foster an environment in which service users and other stakeholders can exercise their rights to raise issues of concern.
- 2) This policy does not apply to staff of the organisation. Paid and unpaid staff, including students, volunteers and Board Members are referred to SANDBAG's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

Policy

- 3) Complaints/feedback mechanisms shall be made available to and easily accessible for all stakeholders including service users.
- 4) SANDBAG shall ensure that stakeholders are made aware of those mechanisms and complaints are handled in a just and respectful manner.
- 5) For the purpose of this policy, a complaint generally refers to an issue identified by a party external to the organisation (client, stakeholder, community member). An issue identified by a staff member or volunteer will be dealt with as per SANDBAG's Grievance Policy and Procedures.
- 6) All criminal issues (or possible criminal issues) will be referred to appropriate authorities (i.e. police and or child safety).
- 7) SANDBAG will ensure there is to be no retribution or negative consequence to service users/their family members/or persons making a complaint on behalf of the client. Service delivery will not cease as a result of the complaint.
- 8) SANDBAG assures complainants that the complaint will be dealt with confidentially and only those with direct involvement in the complaint will be privy to the information.
- 9) Complaints can be made to an external source i.e. the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission at any time, or if complainant is not satisfied with how the matter has been handled.
- 10) A person making a complaint can opt out of SANDBAG's complaints handling process at any time.

Procedure

- 11) Person reports complaint regarding area of concern.
 - a. Dispute avoidance - parties are encouraged to meet to discuss issues if appropriate or possible
 - b. Agreed upon actions are followed up.
- 12) If unresolved and/or the person wishes to register or progress as follows:
 - a. Person with complaint meets with the relevant Supervisor/ Manager (or delegate) who has consultation with appropriate parties.
 - b. Manager (or delegate) to mediate with parties involved if possible / appropriate
 - i. Complaint is recorded in the organisational complaints register.
 - ii. Documentation kept and forwarded to staff personnel file (if relevant)
 - iii. Agreed upon actions are followed up.

If unresolved:

- 13) Within 7 working days formal processes are progressed as follows:
 - a. Complainant completes and lodges a complaints form, email or verbal report to the appropriate authority.
 - b. Person with complaint meets with the CEO (or the CEO's delegate) or Board Member (if complaint is in relation to the CEO), who has consultation with appropriate parties.

Documentation kept by CEO (or the CEO's delegate) or the Board as required and forwarded to personnel file (if relevant).
 - c. CEO/Board provides written notice to the person against who the complaint has been made. This notice will:
 - i. Set out the issues raised;
 - ii. Nominate a date and time for a meeting, including the option of a support person to attend.
 - d. CEO/Board meets with the person against who the complaint has been made to provide an opportunity for a response to the complaint. The response can be verbal or written. At the conclusion of this meeting a follow up meeting date will be set.
 - e. CEO/Board assess the information provided by all parties.

- f. Within 28 days, the CEO/Board hold follow up meeting with the person who the complaint has been made to advise of the outcome.
- g. CEO/Board forward letters to both/all parties advising of the outcome and any further actions that may be required. All parties are advised of their options should they not be happy with the outcome. These options may include:
 - i. Matter referred to the Board;
 - ii. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (if relevant), or Advocacy Service.

14) The Board will always be involved if legal action is initiated or if the complaint relates to the conduct and/or actions of the CEO.

15) All criminal issues (or possible criminal issues) will be referred to appropriate authorities.

16) At any time during the complaints process the complainant can contact an external agency, a funding body, an advocate to report complaints and/or seek assistance to resolve a complaint:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friend • Local Politician • Police • A legal service • Queensland Human Rights Commission
https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au • NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
ph: 1800 035 544
https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints • Department of Justice and Attorney General
www.justice.qld.gov.au
Phone: 07 3239 3520 • Queensland Advocacy Incorporated
Phone 1300 130 582; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.qai.org.au • Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
Phone: 1800 080 464
https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/contact-us/compliments-complaints • Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
www.desbt.qld.gov.au
Phone: 13 74 68 • Department of Social Services (Disability Employment Services) Phone: 1300 653 227; Email: complaints@dss.gov.au • Department of Communities, Disabilities and Seniors
ph: 1800 491 467 |
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17) All complaints are de-identified and documented in the Complaints register. Information contained in the organisational complaints register is used to inform operational planning and continuous improvement processes if appropriate.