

Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

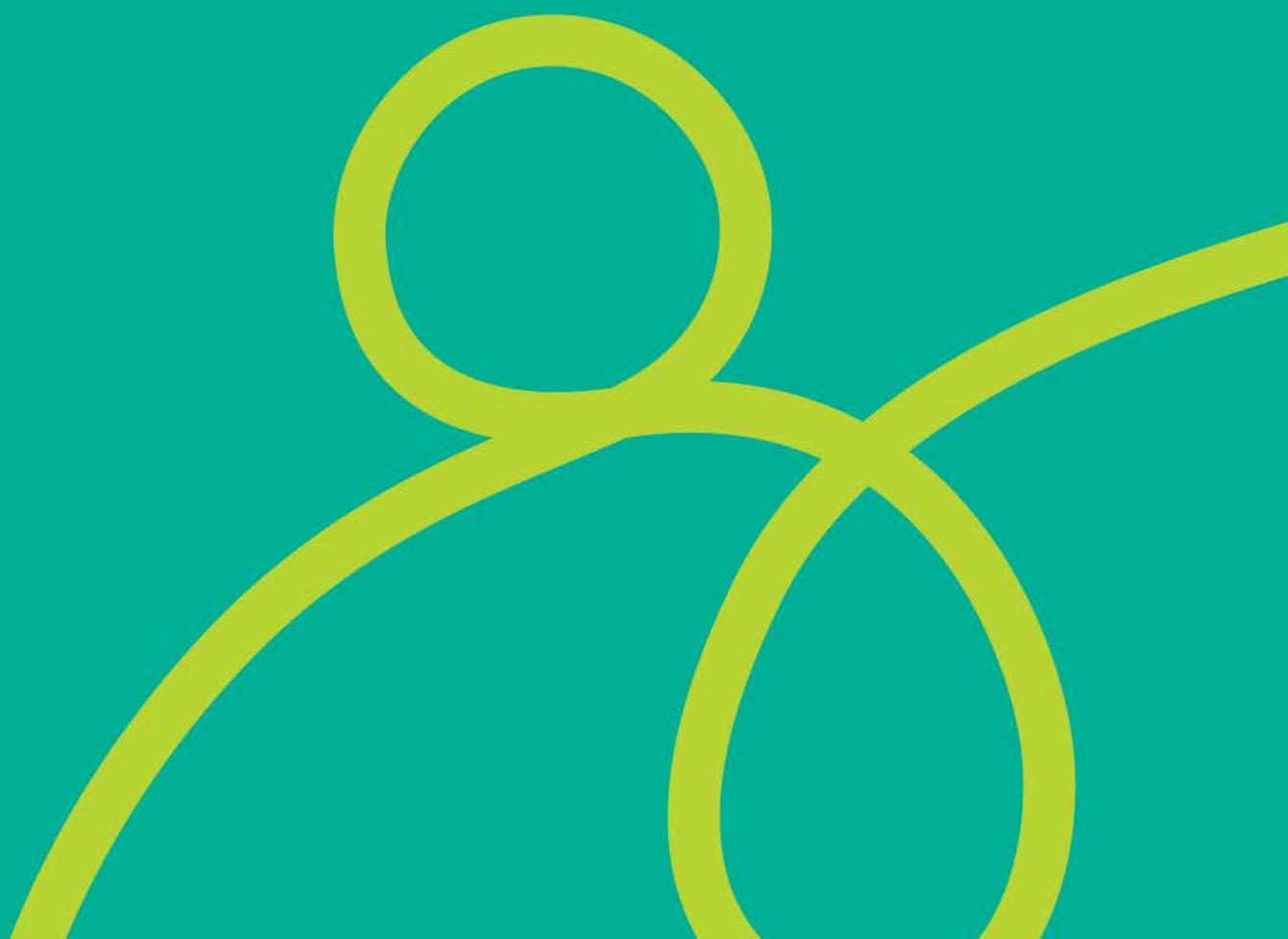


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Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Plan Partners' purpose is to enable you to live the life you want by partnering with you to bring your NDIS plan to life. Plan Partners is committed to providing a high quality and professional service that meets your needs. As an organisation we genuinely welcome and encourage feedback, ideas and suggestions. All feedback is valued and helps us to develop a better service to deliver positive outcomes for achieving your goals.

2. Policy Statement

You can expect that Plan Partners will:

- actively encourage you (our customers), your family and carers to provide feedback or to raise concerns about any aspect of the service Plan Partners provides that is not meeting your expectation of quality and professionalism;
- respect that you, your family and carers will decide how, when and where you wish to make a complaint and you can choose a key contact person at Plan Partners to work through the process with;
- provide you with ongoing information about Plan Partners feedback and complaints policy and processes that are accessible, easily understood and culturally relevant;
- resolve your complaint in a confidential, fair, and timely manner with personal views respected;
- help you to find a support person or advocate to assist or represent you if you chose (list contained in Appendix A). Plan Partners will also inform you of your right to make a complaint to external agencies;
- throughout the complaint handling process Plan Partners will support your participation, identify your desired goal, and keep you and their supporters informed of all decisions and the reasons for those decisions;
- ensure that there are no negative consequences or disadvantage to you or your supporters as a result of the complaint or expressed view; and
- use Plan Partners feedback and complaints review process to inform and direct continuous improvement across the organisation.

3. Scope

The National Disability Services Acts and Standards relate to the provision of disability services for people with a disability and recognise the role of your family, friends, carers and advocates.

This Policy relates to all activities of Plan Partners. Each area of Plan Partners is required to take responsibility for ensuring full understanding of the commitments outlined in this policy and implement

relevant systems, procedures, workflows and other strategies that will direct the development of Plan Partners culture of Customer Service.

This policy will also apply in full to all volunteers, contractors, agents, visitors, consultants, suppliers and customers whilst they are on Plan Partners premises or providing any service to a Plan Partners customer, their family or carers.

4. Application

All relevant Plan Partners employees (ongoing, temporary, casual, contractors and volunteers) are required to respond to complaints. The response must be in accordance with the principles outlined in this Policy. For the purposes of this Policy the following are excluded from the scope of this Policy and they have another specific management process and supporting Policy that are available through Plan Partners, such as:

- staff grievances;
- staff concerns about a client's welfare;
- appeals against a decision made about eligibility to receive services, complaints from service providers regarding its contractual arrangements with Plan Partners or complaints about other service providers;
- feedback and/or criticism for which a response is not expected;
- incident related matters;
- fraud and corruption;
- abuse and negligence; and
- protected disclosures and requests for service or information.

5. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure that Plan Partners regularly and actively seeks your feedback about the service you receive, creating a partnership where you, your family and carers feel safe and supported to complain and express a view point, how and when you want with the assistance you choose;
- to ensure that you, your family and your carers are aware of your rights, responsibilities and Plan Partners responsibilities; and
- to meet or exceed the National Disability Services Acts and Standards and comply with all other relevant legislation.

6. Feedback and Complaints Procedure

6.1 Complaint Definition

As ISO 10002 – 2006 defines a complaint as;

'An expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected'.

In line with the above, Plan Partners will consider any express dissatisfaction about our services, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected, as a complaint. Plan Partners takes complaints about our services very seriously. This policy is designed to ensure Plan Partners provides the highest levels of customer service in relation to our complaints handling processes.

6.2 Complaint Types

Complaints can be in relation to:

- service delivery;
- service Access;
- privacy;
- policy; or
- staff Issues (performance, behaviour, attitude).

6.3 Lodging a Complaint

Anyone can make a complaint to Plan Partners regarding our service, you do not have to be receiving services and you may make a complaint on behalf of someone else.

Complaints can be made in several ways; in person, over the phone, and via letter or email.

Plan Partners will support you to make a complaint, for example if required we can arrange an interpreter for you using TIS National Translating services (this includes AUSLAN).

Complaints can be lodged:

Via Website: www.planpartners.com.au

Via Email: info@planpartners.com.au

Via Mail: Plan Partners
PO Box 131
Richmond VIC 3121

Via Phone: 1300 333 700

For Telephone Interpreting Service:

Via Phone: 131 450*

*When using this service remember to have your NDIS number ready.

You may wish to have an advocate or someone to support you or to act on your behalf to make a complaint. There are several advocacy services that provide this kind of assistance (see Appendix A – National Disability Peak Advocacy Group available nationally).

6.4 Receiving Complaints

Employees at all levels will record and deal with complaints including understanding of what action can be taken to resolve the complaint. Complaints that cannot be resolved at the first point of contact (i.e. over the phone) require an acknowledgement either verbally or in writing (i.e. by email) that you will receive a response within two (2) business days advising of the requirement of ongoing investigation.

- **When complaints are received verbally, we will:**
 - provide you with an explanation of the events that occurred, if known at the time;
 - comprehensively record the conversation and concerns, along with all necessary details (names, date issue first arose, etc) into the customer relations management system – including where the complaint is resolved;
 - identify the issues for resolution, including the key concerns raised by you;
 - clarify with you directly, if any issue is unclear;
 - know when to escalate the complaint to a Team Leader or Manager;
 - advise of the complaints handling process, and
 - commence handling the complaint if appropriate.
- **When complaints are received in writing, we will;**
 - acknowledge receipt of the complaint by contacting you within 1 business day of receipt; and
 - follow the procedural points above.

In all cases Plan Partners can accept anonymous complaints and we will investigate these as far as possible.

6.5 Information Collection

The Plan Partners representative will collect relevant information including:

- name of person making the complaint (on behalf of yourself or someone else);
- preferred method of return contact;
- details of the complaint; and
- preference of outcome.

6.6 Recording Complaints

Each State office of Plan Partners is responsible for entering complaints information in our customer relations management system as complaints are received, including complaints received and immediately resolved.

6.7 Investigating the Complaint

All complaints require, to a greater or lesser degree, an investigation to determine what has happened and what course of action is needed in response. The person managing the complaint will consider:

- what information is required and where to source it;
how it should be collected (system's review, phone call, document review etc);
- what you would like to resolve the issue, in what time frame, and if we can reasonably meet this expectation; and
- how a response should be communicated to the you (verbally, email, letter etc).

6.8 Responding to Complaints

Once the information has been analysed, we should be able to action a response. Actions taken to resolve a complaint must be based on the evidence, address the issues raised by you and be informed by the principles of fairness, respect and transparency. If there is any doubt over the appropriate action regarding a complaint, we will escalate the complaint and relevant information to a line manager for consideration of options.

Options for appropriate action may include, but are not limited to:

- explaining the process employed by Plan Partners which led to the complaint;
- training / Education of Plan Partners employee(s);
- provision of relevant information to you;
- further complaint investigation;
- offering you an apology; or
- ongoing monitoring of the issue.

Plan Partners employees will ensure that the outcome of the complaint investigation is clearly communicated to you. Final responses may be in the form of a letter, an email or telephone.

The final response will:

- address each of the points you raised with a full explanation, or if not possible, provide you with the reasons why a detailed response is not available and advise you that a further response will be provided within two (2) business days;
- give specific details about the investigation – i.e. sources of information, what has been discovered to date etc;

- ensure that you have been provided with the contact details of the staff member who is responsible for handling your complaint; and
- include details of further action available to you, if appropriate.

7. Complaint Handling Escalation Process

A complaint is referred to the next level of management when the matter is outside a staff member's ability to resolve the complaint.

In cases where you do not feel comfortable in making a complaint to those directly involved, the appropriate team leader / manager will speak with you. If you do not wish to speak to or correspond with a team leader / manager, you will be referred to a senior manager.

Wherever possible, complaints should be dealt with by staff members from the team involved. However, for more serious matters or those with potential broader implications, a manager will be notified and participate in the resolution.

All complaints are recorded on the Plan Partners internal feedback and complaints register and are examined for continuous improvement purposes.

8. External Disputes Resolution

If a complaint remains unresolved and requires further follow up, or if you are not satisfied with the final resolution offered by us in attempting to resolve a dispute, we can assist with information regarding a number of options for you to lodge a complaint with an external agency for follow up.

These include:

National Abuse and Neglect Hotline

- National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline
 - www.disabilityhotline.org
 - 1800 880 052

New South Wales

- Health Care Complaints Commission
 - www.hccc.nsw.gov.au
 - 1800 043 159
- NSW Ombudsman
 - www.ombo.nsw.gov.au
 - (02) 9206 1000

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Disability & Community Services Commissioner
 - hrc.act.gov.au/disability
 - (02) 6205 2222
- ACT Human Rights Commission
 - hrc.act.gov.au
 - (02) 6205 2222

Queensland

- Central Complaints and Review Unit Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
 - complain@communities.qld.gov.au
 - 1800 177 120
- Office of the Health Ombudsman
 - www.oho.qld.gov.au
 - 133 646

South Australia

- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner
 - www.hcsc.sa.gov.au
 - 1800 232 007

Tasmania

- Health Complaints Commissioner Tasmania
 - www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au
 - 1800 001 170

Victoria

- Health Complaints Commissioner
 - www.hcc.vic.gov.au
 - 1300 582 113
- Disability Services Commissioner
 - www.odsc.vic.gov.au
 - 1800 677 342

9. Policy Review

This Feedback and Complaints Policy will be reviewed every 12 months. Each complaint received will be reviewed in its entirety as part of Plan Partners commitment to continuously improve on service deliverables.

Appendix A – National Disability Peak Advocacy Groups

Below is a small collection of national disability advocacy organisations in Australia.

- Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4) - a4.org.au
- The Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand - www.asan-au.org
- Blind Citizens Australia - bca.org.au
- Brain Injury Australia - braininjuryaustralia.org.au
- Children with Disability Australia - cda.org.au
- Deaf Australia - deafau.org.au
- Deafness Forum of Australia - deafnessforum.org.au
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) - dana.org.au
- First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) - fpdn.org.au
- Human Rights Council of Australia – hrca.org.au
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) - idrs.org.au
- Mental Health Australia - mhaustralia.org
- National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID) - ncid.org.au
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) - neda.org.au
- Physical Disability Australia (PDA) - pda.org.au
- People with Disability Australia - pwd.org.au
- Short Statured People Of Australia - sspa.org.au
- Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) - wwda.org.au

New South Wales

- Ability Incorporated Advocacy Service (AIAS NSW) - abilityincorporated.org.au
- Aboriginal Disability Network NSW (ADN NSW) – adnsw.org.au
- Action for People with Disability Inc - actionadvocacy.org.au
- Advocacy for Inclusion - advocacyforinclusion.org
- Association of Blind Citizens of NSW - asnblind-nsw.org.au
- Australian Centre for Disability Law - disabilitylaw.org.au
- Brain Injury Association of NSW (BIA) - biansw.org.au
- Central Coast Disability Network - Individual Advocacy Project - ccdn.com.au
- Deaf Society of NSW - deafsocietynsw.org.au
- Regional Disability Advocacy Service - rdas.org.au
- Disability Advocacy NSW (DA) - da.org.au
- Disability Advocacy & Information Service (DAIS) - dais.org.au
- Disability & Aged Information Service Inc - daisi.asn.au
- Disability Information Advocacy Service (DIAS) - dias.net.au
- Family Advocacy - family-advocacy.com
- Information on Disability & Education Awareness Services (IDEAS) - ideas.org.au
- Illawarra Advocacy - illawarraadvocacy.org.au

- Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) - idrs.org.au
- Indigenous Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS) - idas.org.au
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) - mdaa.org.au
- NSW Disability Advocacy Network – ndan.org.au
- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability - nswcid.org.au
- Penrith Disabilities Resource Centre - pdrc.org.au
- People With Disability Australia (PWDA) - pwd.org.au
- Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) - pdcnsw.org.au
- Self Advocacy Sydney Inc - sasinc.com.au
- Side By Side Advocacy Inc - sidebysideadvocacy.org.au
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) - scia.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network - actmhcn.org.au
- Advocacy for Inclusion - advocacyforinclusion.org.au
- ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) - adacas.org.au
- People with Disabilities (ACT) - pwdact.org.au
- Speaking Out for Autism Spectrum Disorders (SOfASD) - sofasd.org

Queensland

- Amparo Advocacy - amparo.org.au
- Gold Coast Advocacy - gca.org.au
- Independent Advocacy Townsville - independentadvocacy.org.au
- Mackay Advocacy - mackayadvocacy.com.au
- Queensland Advocacy - qai.org.au
- Queensland Aged & Disability Advocacy - qada.org.au
- Queenslanders with Disabilities (QDN) - qdn.org.au
- Rights in Action, Cairns FNQ - rightsinaction.org
- Speaking Up for You - sufy.org.au
- Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy Program - citizenadvocacy.com

South Australia

- Brain Injury Network of SA (BINSAs) - binsa.org
- Citizen Advocacy South Australia - citizenadvocacysa.com.au
- Advocacy for Disability - advocacyfordisability.org.au
- Family Advocacy - familyadvocacy.org.au
- Independent Advocacy SA - independentadvocacysa.org.au

Northern Territory

- Darwin Community Legal Service - dcls.org.au
- Disability Advocacy (Alice Springs Municipality, Amoonguna Community and the Tennant Creek Municipality) - das.org.au
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yunkunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) - npywc.org.au

Victoria

- Action for More Independence & Dignity in Accommodation (AMIDA) - amida.org.au
- Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC) - adec.org.au
- Assert 4 All (A4All) (formerly Barwon disAbility Resource Council) - bdrc.org.au
- Association for Children with a Disability Inc - acd.org.au
- Association of Employees with Disability (AED) Legal Centre - aed.org.au
- Brain Injury Matters (BIM) - braininjurymatters.org
- Citizen Advocacy Sunbury & District - casunbury.net
- Colac Otway Region Advocacy Service - coras.com.au
- Communication Rights Australia - caus.com.au
- Deaf Victoria - deafvictoria.org.au
- Regional Disability Advocacy Service - rdas.org.au
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) - daru.org.au
- Disability Advocacy Victoria (DAV) - disabilityadvocacyvictoria.org.au
- Disability Discrimination Legal Service Inc (DDLS) - ddls.org.au
- Disability Justice Advocacy (DJA) - justadvocacy.com
- Disability Resources Centre (DRC) - drc.org.au
- Melbourne East Disability Advocacy - meda.org.au
- New Horizons (EACH) - each.com.au
- North East Citizen Advocacy (NECA) - citizenadvocacy.com.au
- Regional Information and Advocacy Council (RIAC) - riac.org.au
- Reinforce - reinforce.org.au
- Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU) - saru.net.au
- Southern Disability Advocacy - southernda.org.au
- Southwest Advocacy Association Inc - southwestadvocacy.org.au
- STAR Victoria - starvictoria.org.au
- Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc (VALID) - valid.org.au
- Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) - wdv.org.au
- Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) - ydas.org.au

Tasmania

- Advocacy Tasmania (Hobart, Devonport and Launceston) - advocacytasmania.org.au
- Association for Children with Disability (Tas) - acdtas.com.au
- Speak Out Association of Tasmania - speakoutadvocacy.org

Western Australia

- Advocacy South West - advocacysouthwest.org.au
- Citizen Advocacy Perth West - capw.org.au
- Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre - edac.org.au
- HeadWest (Brain Injury Association of WA) - headwest.asn.au
- Midland Information Debt & Legal Advocacy Service - midlas.org.au
- People With Disabilities (WA) - pwdwa.org
- Women with Disabilities (WA) - wwdwa.org.au
- Uniting Care West - Your Say - www.unitingcarewest.org.au