



COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

POLICY STATEMENT

Woodbury Autism Education and Research values complaints and feedback from people with disability, support networks, service providers, staff and regulators to ensure people are treated fairly when they use our services. Complaints and feedback are an important source of information and are used to improve our services where possible.

It is important that all staff, service users and support networks are aware of the process involved in making a complaint. All team members, service users, and their support networks should be able to make a complaint without fear of reprisal. The provision of feedback will not impact on the service provision or their rights as a participant.

This policy supports Woodbury Autism Education and Research to apply the National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 4: Feedback and Complaints.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers or business partners. This policy is owned by the Board.

PRINCIPLES

- Everyone has the right to complain
- People making complaints should be supported to access complaints processes
- Complaints processes should be sensitive to any cultural requirements
- Robust complaints processes and systems are an important part of quality service management and help safeguard people with disabilities
- Complaints identify risks to people with disabilities but also visitors and staff and support Woodbury Autism Education and Research to meet its occupational health and safety obligations
- Complaints identify opportunities for Woodbury Autism Education and Research to continuously improve its services



DEFINITIONS

ALLEGATION

A claim that an illegal act has occurred. Allegations are always investigated and sometimes an external authority undertakes the investigation, such as the police.

CONCERN

A notification that a person is worried that something is not working, has gone wrong or is otherwise not as it should be.

COMPLAINT

Formal advice that an incident has occurred, something is not working the way it should, something is inappropriate, or someone is at risk. A serious incident process is required for legal and contractual purposes when a complaint is about a serious incident.

WHAT TO DO IF THE SUPPORT NETWORK HAS A COMPLAINT

Where possible, the first point of contact should be the person directly involved in the incident or matter relating to the complaint.

The person making the complaint can contact a representative at Woodbury Autism Education and Research, via email or telephone, to outline the nature of the concern and request a time to discuss the matter further.

If the individual making the complaint does not feel comfortable disclosing the complaint directly to the person involved, an email or phone call can be made directly to the clinical director to discuss the matter. Alternatively, the individual making the complaint can write a letter detailing their concerns.

WHAT IS THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Once a complaint is received, the individual to whom the complaint has been made will seek to gather further information about the incident or concern. This process will ensure all relevant information relating to the incident is compiled, so an informed opinion can be created.

Once a complaint is received, the support network or staff member can expect a response from Woodbury Autism Education and Research within 2 working days.

Typically, the complaint will be responded to within Woodbury Autism Education and Research. The support networks and relevant others will be invited to a meeting to discuss the concern, and collaboratively determine what changes can be made to minimise the risk of the incident reoccurring in the future.



Following up from the meeting, a written summary of discussions and agreed changes will be made and passed on to relevant parties. These summaries can be anonymous, if necessary, to protect client confidentiality.

The support network can expect a follow up from Woodbury Autism Education and Research within 4 weeks of the complaint to discuss progress and changes made since the meeting.

There may be times when the nature of the complaint requires Woodbury Autism Education and Research to disclose information to other external agencies. This will be done in conjunction with appropriate safeguarding legislation. Examples of when the information needs to be disclosed to other agencies includes, but is not limited to, issues concerning abuse and neglect, reportable conduct, risk of significant harm. In these instances, Woodbury Autism Education and Research will take guidance from the external agency to ensure appropriate investigation of the concern.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SUPPORT NETWORK IS UNHAPPY WITH THE COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

All support networks and staff have the right to external support during the complaint process. Woodbury Autism Education and Research encourages and respects the rights of any participant, and their support network, to use an advocate of their choice. The participant has the right to change their advocate at any time. We also recognise that effective advocacy needs to be independent and separated from direct service delivery.

Woodbury Autism Education and Research will support the individual making the complaint, in finding and accessing an appropriate advocate should the situation arise, in which the individual is not satisfied with Woodbury Autism Education and Research's response to the complaint.

Woodbury Autism Education and Research encourages participants to select and advocate whom they are comfortable with and who is able to advocate for the participants' individual needs. Below is a list of local services who provide advocacy in the areas of Autism and Disability; however, the participant is welcome to select any advocate of their choice

- Association for Children with a Disability NSW
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Family and Community Services (FACS) NSW
- Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT)

All participants, service users, support networks and staff members have the right to contact the NDIS Commission should they feel their complaint has not been adequately resolved.



RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Continuous improvement policy
- Code of conduct
- Safeguarding policy
- Child Protection

RELATED LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- Carers' Recognition Act 2004 (WA)
- Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
- Occupation Health and Safety Act 1984 (WA)
- Children and young persons (care and protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Child protection (working with children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013: Principles.
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- NDIS Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework

COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOW CHART

