



Policy

Complaints, Compliments and Feedback

Endorsed by: CEO

Document Owner: Organisational Management

Section 1: Preamble

Complaints, compliments and feedback from participants, volunteers, families, carers, employees, service providers, community members and regulators provide valuable information which works to continuously improve the safety, fairness and quality of Goulburn Options services.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Goulburn Options procedures, **Complaints, Compliments and Feedback** and **Child Safety Incidents and Complaints**.

Principles

- Everyone has the right to complain and/or provide feedback.
- People making complaints or giving feedback will be supported to access complaints and feedback processes in the way they are most likely to understand
- Complaints and feedback processes will be culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs.
- Robust complaints and feedback processes are an important part of quality service management and help safeguard participants, employees, and all other stakeholders of the organisation.
- Complaints and feedback help to identify risks to participants but also to visitors and employees. This information assists Goulburn Options to meet its occupational health and safety obligations.
- Complaints and feedback identify opportunities for Goulburn Options to continuously improve its services.
- Positive feedback supports Goulburn Options to understand the successes of the organisation.
- People making complaints or giving feedback can remain anonymous.
- People making complaints can seek advice or assistance from the NDIS Commission, and/or external advocate at any point in the process.
- People can make a complaint or provide feedback even after they have withdrawn from services.
- Goulburn Options has zero tolerance for racism, bullying, discrimination, abuse, or exploitation. All concerns will be taken seriously, acted on promptly, and handled in a way that keeps everyone safe, respected, and supported—without fear of retaliation.
- All complaints related to breaches of the organisation's Code of Conduct will be dealt with seriously and efficiently.

No one will be adversely affected as a result of making a complaint or a complaint being made on their behalf. Goulburn Options is committed to quality service delivery and encourages anyone to speak up about what is working and not working with the supports being provided.

Goulburn Options will investigate and work to resolve all complaints and feedback quickly and effectively.

Section 2: Policy Statement

All complaints/feedback are managed by members of Goulburn Options administration. If a support worker is approached with a complaint or feedback from a participant, family, or other stakeholder, they must follow the Goulburn Options Complaints and Feedback process and ensure the complaint/feedback is passed on to administration within 24hrs.

Please note: General or positive feedback may not require a formal response as outlined below.

Complaint information is private and must not be shared with people outside of the complaints process.

Any complaints or feedback received will be documented within 24 hours of being made/received and lodged in the Goulburn Options Complaints and Feedback Register. Unless the complaint or feedback has been submitted anonymously, a member of Goulburn Options administration will confirm receipt of the complaint/feedback with the person who made it and outline next steps and timeframe.

Following the receipt of the complaint/feedback, the relevant administrative employee (e.g., General Manager, Support Services Leader, CEO) will contact the person lodging the complaint within five working days to discuss the matter. Details of the complaint and any response will be documented. Goulburn Options will work with the person lodging the complaint to identify desirable outcomes in an effort to resolve the complaint within three weeks.

If a serious complaint or allegation is made against an employee, that person will not have contact with the complainant while the complaint is resolved. If a complaint is made directly to the employee the complaint concerns, it is the responsibility of that employee to pass the complaint on to Goulburn Options administration as soon as possible. If a complaint involves the CEO, it will be referred to the Board Chair.

At any stage of the complaints process, the complainant may choose to involve an independent advocate and/or the NDIS Commission.

Throughout the Complaints Process, Goulburn Options will:

- Ensure that the person making the complaint receives adequate support and complaint information. Resource documents and information are provided to all staff and participants upon induction/intake to Goulburn Options and are available from all administration employees upon request.
- Keep the person informed of the complaints process.
- Ensure the person is appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint.
- Ensure a completed copy of the complaint is given to the person making the complaint upon request. This form must include information about how/where the complaint was raised, resolution(s) offered and timelines, as necessary.
- Ensure that complaints are kept private.
- Ensure that people involved in a complaint are given a fair opportunity to respond to issues raised and to present their views.
- Ensure that complaints which arise from community concern, incidents of a serious nature such as sexual or physical abuse, or incidents which involve a criminal offence are immediately reported directly to the General Manager and CEO, and that the required reporting is completed. An incident report for referral to the NDIS

Commission may be required. Incidents of a serious nature may require referral to police. If unsure, contact the NDIS Commission for advice. (See Incident Management and Reportable Incidents Policy for further information.)

Complaints and feedback made by children and young people will be respected with the same seriousness and efficiency as those made by adults accessing our service. For further information on the ways in which Goulburn Options seeks to empower and promote the wellbeing of all children and young people, please see the GO policy **Child Safety and Wellbeing**.

GO's **Child Safety Incidents and Complaints** procedure outlines the process of receiving and managing child safe incidents and complaints, and must be read in conjunction with this policy where relevant.

Where a matter needs to be referred to an outside agency or otherwise investigated, all staff will cooperate with the inquiry.

The CEO or General Manager will decide whether other policies and procedures apply in the resolution of a complaint, (e.g. Safeguarding or Eliminating Restrictive Practices policies.)

After the complaint has been finalised:

- Goulburn Options will review the outcomes of the complaint, including what learning or service improvements occurred as a result.
- Goulburn Options will ensure the person who made the complaint is updated on the implementation of any relevant outcomes. This will be recorded in the Complaints and Feedback Register.

2.1 Complaints Process Overview

1. Goulburn Options will listen to your complaint.
2. Goulburn Options will record your complaint within 24hrs.
3. The relevant members of Goulburn Options Administration will contact you within 5 business days to discuss the complaint.
4. Goulburn Options will work with you to resolve the complaint within 3 weeks.

At any stage you can contact the NDIS Commission: 1800 035 544

TTY services for people with hearing or speech difficulties: 133 677

2.2 Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for the implementation of this complaints procedure. This includes encouraging and supporting people accessing Goulburn Options services to raise any concerns or complaints they have on any issue.

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring complaints are recorded and actioned.

The relevant member of Goulburn Options administration as delegated by the General Manager or CEO is responsible for communicating with participants, family, carers, and other key stakeholders during the complaints process.

2.3 Reporting

The General Manager will report all serious incidents to the CEO.

The CEO or General Manager will contact police where there is an allegation of a criminal offence.

External reports will be made to relevant regulatory bodies where required, including the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Commission for Children and Young People.

De-identified complaint activity is routinely reported to the Board as part of ongoing quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Goulburn Options will provide statistical and other information about complaints to the NDIS Commissioner as required.

2.4 Review and Evaluation

Goulburn Options will communicate with participants and their caregivers about quality evaluations and encourage their participation in evaluating services.

Complaints and feedback data will be monitored to identify service gaps, issues or trends in practice, procedures or policies that need to be amended to ensure continuous improvement and quality service delivery.

Complaints data will be maintained for a minimum of seven years.

Section 3: Roles

Role	Responsibilities and Accountabilities
Board	Oversee and review de-identified complaints data for quality assurance and continuous improvement.
Executive Management	- Ensure compliance with the Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018. - Address serious incidents and complaints involving criminal allegations. - Determine whether other policies and procedures apply in resolving complaints.
Team Leaders	- Support staff in implementing the complaints and feedback process. - Ensure complaints are acknowledged and escalated appropriately and within designated timeframes. - Encourage and support participants to raise concerns or complaints.
Administration	- Record and document complaints in the Complaints and Feedback Register - Report serious incidents and complaints to Executive Management.
Workforce (<i>DSW, Students, Volunteers</i>)	- Respond to participant complaints/feedback and ensure they are passed on to administration within 24 hours. - Support participants in understanding and accessing the complaints process. - Maintain confidentiality and follow the established process.

Section 4: Related Documentation

Document Name	Document Type
Complaints, Compliments and Feedback	Procedure

Code of Conduct	Policy
Incident Management and Reportable Incidents	Policy
Grievance Management	Policy
Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Register	Register
Complaints, Compliments and Feedback QR Code	QR Code
Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Pamphlet	Form
Suggestions Register	Register
Suggestions QR Code	QR Code
Continuous Improvement Register	Register
Child Safety and Wellbeing	Policy
Child Safety Incidents and Complaints	Procedure

Section 5: Definitions

Term	Definition
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	An expression of dissatisfaction with a support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is expected.
Feedback	Information about a person, service or location which is used as a basis for improvement. Positive feedback reinforces and highlights the success of a person, service or location.

Date of Last Review:	May 2025	Date of Next Review:	May 2027
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