

Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure

Description

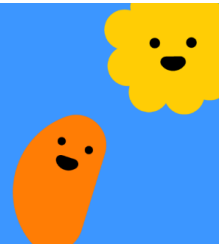
Autism Partnership is committed to ensuring that all clients of the service, including children, family members, carers, and other relevant stakeholders are free to make complaints and to have their grievances dealt with promptly, fairly and co-operatively by Autism Partnership. All complaints will be responded to courteously and will be given high priority for resolution and remediation.

Scope

This complaints policy applies to concerns that relate to the service delivery, policies, procedures and decisions of Autism Partnership. While this policy relates to the management of complaints specifically, feedback of any type is welcome. Autism Partnership reviews and notes all feedback, complaints and compliments and uses this information to improve our services.

Definitions

1. **Complaint:** Any expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person. This policy identifies two (2) stages of complaints which are categorised by the complexity of the issues raised in the complaint and the time Autism Partnership considers will be required to resolve the complaint.
 - Non Complex Complaint: A complaint that can be resolved quickly by frontline staff.
 - Complex Complaint: A complaint that raises complex issues and/or requires time to review and resolve.
2. **Compliment:** Any expression of satisfaction
3. **Feedback:** Any suggestion for improvement or identification of a deficiency where it is clear that a specific response or resolution may not be required nor expected.
4. **Notification:** A notification is the process of providing information about the professional conduct, professional performance or health of an Autism Partnership employee or student to the relevant National Board. Any person or organisation



can make a notification if they believe that an individual health practitioner may be putting the public at risk.

5. **Query:** A question or request for further information about the delivery of service, a policy or a procedure. Autism Partnership records data about queries as part of our frontline service delivery.

Responsibilities

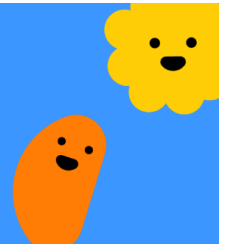
The Chief Executive Officer of Autism Partnership has overall responsibility for ensuring that complaints are managed appropriately. This policy is reviewed at least every two years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our organisation as well as best practice guidelines. When reviewing this policy we consider feedback received from students, family members, carers, and other relevant stakeholders.

Procedures

Making a Complaint:

Autism Partnership is committed to ensuring that all clients, their families, carers and/or advocates are free to raise a complaint, to have their complaint dealt with promptly, fairly and in a non-threatening manner and to have their complaint resolved if possible. To ensure that Autism Partnership's treatment of complaints is fair, we are committed to the following principles:

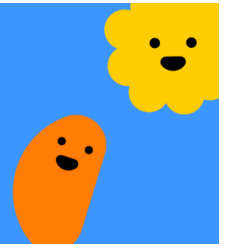
1. Complaints are viewed positively by us and are a vital component of our commitment to continuous improvement.
2. Consumers/Participants, their families, carers and/or advocates have the right to raise any complaints or concerns regarding any matter related to services provided by Autism Partnership, and to have their concerns investigated and resolved fairly and quickly;
3. Consumers/Participants, their families, carers and/or advocates raising a complaint can do so without fear of retribution;
4. Consumers/Participants, their families, carers and/or advocates wishing to raise a complaint can do so at different levels in the organisation, depending on the complexity of the issue;
 - a. Non Complex Complaint: A complaint that can be resolved quickly by frontline staff
 - i. Managed by a Site Manager/Coordinator/Behaviour Consultant or Allied Health professional
 - ii. Straight forward complaints pertaining to service delivery or policies



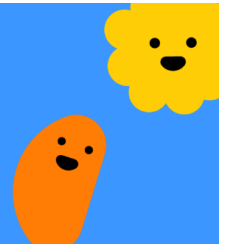
- iii. Examples: Complaints about delays, poor communication, scheduling
 - b. Complex Complaint: A complaint that raises complex issues and/or requires time to review and resolve.
 - i. Managed by Company Directors
 - ii. Complex complaints about service delivery, policies and non complex complaints that have been unable to be resolved
 - iii. Examples: Complaints about terms & conditions relating to service and policy.
5. Consumers/Participants, their families, carers and/or advocates have the right to be informed about the internal and external avenues open to them to raise their concerns, and how their complaint will be handled by Autism Partnership;
6. The complaints process shall be client oriented, culturally aware, accessible, timely, efficient, and confidential;
7. Consumers/Participants have the right to have a friend or advocate support them in raising their concerns;
8. Complaint handling shall, whenever possible, focus upon improving existing services.
9. Confidentiality according to our Privacy Policy will be maintained throughout the process
10. We accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

Response to Complaints:

1. Early resolution: Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with the client's Behaviour Consultant, Allied Health Professional, Site Manager/Coordinator or the Directors at Autism Partnership.
2. Unless the complaint has been resolved at the first contact, we will record the complaint and its supporting information. We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 48 hours.
3. After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:



- a. How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
 - b. Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
 - c. How the person making the complaint is being affected
 - d. The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
 - e. Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other parties.
4. To address a complaint we may gather additional information and further investigate the claims made in the complaint which might involve a third party.
 5. We will communicate the outcome of the complaint in writing. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.
 6. Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them of:
 - a. the outcome of the complaint and any action we took
 - b. the reason/s for our decision
 - c. the remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
 - d. any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an external review or appeal.
 - i. VICTORIA:
 1. If you remain dissatisfied with our response, you may contact the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC). The HCC responds to complaints about health services and the handling of health information in Victoria. Their service is free, confidential and impartial. To lodge a complaint with the HCC:
 2. Fill out a complaint form online at hcc.vic.gov.au or
 3. Phone 1300 582 113 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday to discuss your complaint.
 - ii. QUEENSLAND:
 1. The Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) is available to contact if you have a complaint or notification to make about a health service provided in Queensland. The OHO is an independent body established under the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 (the Act).
 2. You can contact the Office of the Health Ombudsman at <https://www.oho.qld.gov.au/>
 3. Phone 133 646 between 9am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday to discuss your complaint.
 - iii. NSW:



1. The Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) responds to complaints or inquiries about health service providers in NSW.
 2. You can contact the HCCC at <https://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/>
 3. If you would like to speak to someone at the Commission for more information before you lodge a written complaint you can contact the Inquiry Line during business hours, Monday to Friday from 9am – 5pm on 1800 043 159.
7. We will keep comprehensive records about:
- a. how we managed the complaint
 - b. the outcome/s of the complaint including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, and
 - c. any outstanding actions that need to be followed up
8. If in the course of investigation, we make any adverse findings about a particular individual, we will consider any applicable privacy obligations under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and any applicable exemptions in or made pursuant to that Act, before sharing our findings with the person making the complaint.

References

- [Health Complaints Commissioner \(HCC\) Code of conduct for General Health Services](#)
- [Office of the Health Ombudsman \(OLD\) National Code of Conduct for Healthcare Workers \(Queensland\)](#)
- [Health Care Complaints Commission Code of Conduct](#)