



FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Continuum Consulting Australia Pty. Ltd.

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PURPOSE

This policy is in place to ensure Continuum Consulting has a consistent and comprehensive approach to managing compliments, complaints, and suggestions.

Compliments, complaints, and suggestions form a part of a continuous improvement system, feeding into a holistic review of our organisation and the services we provide, and ensure it is meeting changing community needs.

The effective management and resolution of complaints will enhance service users' experience, improve practices and help Continuum Consulting deliver its services.

SCOPE

This policy relates to compliments, complaints, and suggestions from anyone about Continuum Consulting and the services we provide. It is not limited to service users or their families, but anyone who has feedback.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Continuum Consulting is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using Continuum Consulting services, or affected by its operations, has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure fairness, accountability and transparency.

Continuum Consulting welcomes compliments and feedback from any person or organisation using Continuum Consulting services or affected by its operations. Continuum Consulting will acknowledge this compliment and feedback and share when appropriate this information with Continuum Consulting people.

Continuum Consulting will inform service users of their rights and responsibilities in regard to complaints and appeals at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with the organisation and will use appropriate interpreter services to ensure information is available in alternate languages or formats if and when required. Service users will be encouraged to advise a team member if this service is required.

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy Continuum Consulting will ensure that this Policy, Procedures and related processes:

Are easy to use and reflective of programs design.

- Are effectively communicated and promoted to all service users and stakeholders.
- Ensure complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly.
- Are procedurally fair, culturally appropriate and follows principles of natural justice.
- Comply with legislative and compliance requirements.

The complaints and appeals procedure will:

- Require all complaints received to be considered and appropriately recorded.

- Ensure that those who lodge a complaint are treated with respect, recognising that the issue of the complaint is important to the complainant.
- Require that all parties involved maintain confidentiality, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution.
- Recognise that each complainant has different expectations from a complaint, so we shall work with the complainants to acknowledge and recognise, provide answers where possible, address and action where changes can be made, and apologise where it is appropriate.
- Ensure advocacy is offered when a complaint is made and the claimant requires or requests support.
- Guide the resolution of complaints to the claimant's satisfaction wherever possible.
- Deal with all complaints in a timely manner and allow for appeals to decisions to be heard promptly and fairly.
- Keep parties to the complaint informed of progress of the complaint.
- Ensure that all team members, managers are given information about the complaint's procedure as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing client feedback and complaints.
- Ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures and the alternative formats for making a complaint that are available
- Provide a framework that ensures complainants are not penalised in any way or prevented from using services during the progress of a complaint.
- If a matter remains unresolved after a review, the appeals process provides the claimant with the option of referring the matter to an appropriate external authority within their jurisdiction to review the process used in attempting to resolve the complaint.
- Ensure that compliments, complaints and feedback data is collated and considered in organisational reviews and in planning service improvements.

PROCEDURE

Responding to Feedback

When Continuum Consulting Australia Pty Ltd receives feedback of either positive or negative content, this information will be taken to the monthly team meeting and addressed in the course of business and follow up actions recorded as part of the meeting.

Making a Complaint

Complaints may be registered verbally or in writing:

- Directly with the team member who is the immediate contact.

- With the manager or supervisor of that staff member (if the complaint is about the staff member it will normally be dealt with by the team member's manager or supervisor).
- Through email to the organisation
- Through the Continuum Consulting website

Written Complaints

Written complaints can be directed to the respective program that is the source of the complaint.

A team leader or manager will be responsible for receiving the complaint and directing it to the appropriate person for resolution.

Complaints from indigenous and CALD clients

Continuum Consulting will attempt to engage a suitable Aboriginal community member (subject to the complainant's approval) for appropriate cultural support if a complaint involves an Aboriginal child, young person or family, or the relevant CALD agency.

Response and Action

Details of all calls are forwarded to the relevant manager for response and action with outcomes also recorded on the central feedback register.

Continuum Consulting will review the significance of the complaint in response to calls that do not include a return phone number or provide caller identification to ascertain whether follow-up can be undertaken and more information or clarification of the call content to be obtained.

Managing Complaints

This procedure applies to complaints received from clients, the general public, statutory bodies and other stakeholders.

Informal complaints usually stay within the program and are dealt with by the team member receiving the complaint or their manager who will discuss the complaint with the client / service user.

The team member or manager dealing with the complaint will check with the client / service user that they understand the complaints process.

Informal complaints are usually solved quickly, and the client or service user notified verbally of the outcome.

Formal complaints may initially be received by a team member; however, they are dealt with by managers. Formal complaints are recorded on complaints register and, on the client, or service user's file. The complaints register is subject to ongoing review and regular audits.

Responses to formal complaints will be provided in writing but may be supported by other forms of communication to clients / service users. Regardless of the outcome of a complaint, details of the complaint will be used as a catalyst for the ongoing review of systems and procedures and the identification of potential improvements to services and programs.

Complaints Process

On receipt of a complaint it is registered in the Complaints Register.

Once the complaint is registered, the complainant is informed by letter or phone call that the complaint has been received and is provided with information about the investigation process and the anticipated timeframe for resolution.

The complainant's cultural safety is maintained throughout any complaints process.

Investigating a Complaint

The complaint is investigated and assessed, and a decision made on an appropriate response to the complaint. The investigation will involve gathering evidence relevant to the complaint after which the investigator will seek out corroborating information. For example, looking at records, documentation and interviewing relevant people concerned with the complaint.

The person investigating the complaint will have a level of professional judgement on the complaint itself and actions to be taken and will refer to their manager if unsure of the process or their judgement of the complaint.

Continuum Consulting Australia's objective is to resolve complaints and provide a response within 15 working days of the complaint being received. If this timeframe cannot be met, the claimant will be informed of the reasons why and given a revised timeframe for a response to be provided.

Resolving a Complaint

Once the complaint has been investigated, assessed and a decision made on an appropriate response, the complainant will be advised in writing or through another method as agreed with the complainant, of the outcome of the investigation.

Outcomes could include:

- The complaint has been resolved with the complainant advised how resolution was achieved and what this means for the complainant.
- The complaint has been upheld but not yet resolved and an appropriate resolution discussed with the claimant.
- That no further action will be taken regarding the complaint with the claimant advised the reasons for this decision and informed of options available to them if they wish to take further action.
- Complainants may raise multiple issues and at times the final response could see a combination of all the above outcomes.
- At times, due to confidentiality and privacy reasons Continuum Consulting would be unable to provide detail in relation to the outcome of the complaint. This will be explained at this time to the complainant.

Reviewing a complaint

If a complainant is not satisfied with the investigation process, disagrees with a decision made by Continuum Consulting or by a team member who has handled the complaint, or is not satisfied with the resolution, proposed resolution or lack of resolution of their complaint, they can lodge an appeal in writing. The appeal may be submitted to the relevant manager requesting that the complaint be reviewed along with any decisions or resolutions made in response to the claim.

Referral to an External Authority

If the matter still remains unresolved after the program manager's review, the appeals process provides the claimant with the option of referring the matter to an appropriate external authority that has the jurisdiction to review the process used by Continuum Consulting in attempting to resolve the complaint.

Agencies for referral

Service users who wish to register a complaint about a service failure that may occur in the delivery of Continuum Consulting programs and services or about the impact of Continuum Consulting services or operations on them are encouraged to undertake the Continuum Consulting Complaints and Appeals process outlined in the Compliments and Complaints policy and procedure prior to contacting the relevant external authority listed below.

- [Department of Communities and Justice Services](#)

Complaints Unit

Locked Bag 4028

Ashfield NSW 2131

Ph: 1800 000 164

Email: complaints@community.nsw.gov.au

- [NSW Advocate for Children and Young People](#)

Ground Floor, 219-241 Cleveland Street

Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Ph: (02) 9248 0970

Email: acyp@acyp.nsw.gov.au

- [Office of the Children's Guardian](#)

Suite 1, Level 13

418A Elizabeth Street

Surry Hills NSW 2010

Ph: 02 8219 3600

Fax: 02 8219 3699

Email: kids@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

- [NDIS Commission](#)
- [AASW](#)

VALUES

Our values underpin the way in which we act and behave at Continuum Consulting. They describe what is important to us, and guide our thinking and interactions with each other, our customers, and the community. Our core values are:

- Client First

We place the best interests of clients at the centre of everything we do.

- Respect

We demonstrate openness and understanding of the diversity, differences and views of others recognising the values and richness it adds to our organisation.

- Safety

We prioritise the safety of our people and clients in our care.

- Empathy

We always seek to understand the experiences and situations of others to guide our actions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Continuum Consulting people are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which respects the rights and welfare of children.

The Director is responsible to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

The Manager will ensure that compliments, complaints, and suggestions are appropriately recorded in a Feedback Register, where required the feedback is investigated and resolved and will provide the Director with a regular update on the current status of service user complaints.

All Continuum Consulting people must comply with this policy.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- *Ombudsman Act 1974*
- *NDIS Act 2013*
- *Disability Act 2006*
- Complaints register
- Letter acknowledging a complaint
- Letter advising a complaint outcome