

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Table of Contents

CONTEXT	2
PURPOSE	2
SCOPE.....	3
DEFINITIONS	4
POLICY STATEMENT	6
PROCEDURE.....	6
1. The Complaints Management and Resolution System	7
2. Roles and Responsibilities	7
3. Informing Participants and the Public	8
4. How Feedback and Complaints Can Be Made	9
5. Supporting People Who Make Complaints	10
6. Receiving, Acknowledging and Recording Complaints	10
7. Assessing, Investigating and Resolving Complaints	10
8. Procedural Fairness and Conflicts of Interest	12
9. Protection from Adverse Action and Confidentiality	12
10. Complaints Involving Incidents or Unlawful Conduct	13
11. Raising a Complaint with the NDIS Commission	13
12. Records and Reporting to the Commissioner	14
13. Training and Competence	14
14. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement.....	15
15. Document Control and Review	15
RELATED LEGISLATION	16
RELATED INFORMATION	16
RELATED DOCUMENTS	16
APPROVAL	17

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

CONTEXT

Feedback and complaints are a fundamental safeguard for people with disability and one of the most valuable sources of information an organisation has about the quality and safety of its supports. Every participant has the right to speak up about the supports and services they receive, to be heard, and to have their concerns acted on without fear of retribution. **Happy To Help Care Services** treats every complaint, concern, suggestion and compliment as an opportunity to improve, and maintains a culture in which feedback is actively sought and welcomed rather than merely tolerated.

This policy responds to the Feedback and Complaints Management standard in the Core Module of the NDIS Practice Standards, within the Provider Governance and Operational Management division. The quality indicators for that standard are set out in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators for NDIS Practice Standards) Guidelines 2018 and require that: "Each participant has knowledge of and access to the provider's complaints management and resolution system. Complaints and other feedback made by all parties are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and well-managed."

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018 require every registered NDIS provider to implement and maintain a complaints management and resolution system that complies with Part 2 of those Rules. Failure to comply is a breach of a condition of registration under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and may lead to compliance and enforcement action by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

This policy and procedure sets out how **Happy To Help Care Services** welcomes, receives, acknowledges, assesses, resolves, records and learns from feedback and complaints, and how any person can raise a concern directly with the NDIS Commission at any time. It is also guided by the NDIS Commission's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide.

This policy must be read together with the *Governance and Operational Management Policy and Procedure*, the *Quality Management Policy and Procedure*, the *Incident Management Policy and Procedure*, the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure* and the *Freedom from Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure*, and the *Whistleblower Policy and Procedure*.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that each participant has knowledge of and access to **Happy To Help Care Services** complaints management and resolution system,

and that complaints and other feedback made by all parties are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and well-managed.

This policy aims to:

- maintain a complaints management and resolution system that is relevant and proportionate to the scope and complexity of supports delivered and the size and scale of the organisation, follows the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, and complies with the requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018;
- ensure each participant is provided with information on how to give feedback or make a complaint, including avenues external to **Happy To Help Care Services** and their right to access advocates, and ensure there is a supportive environment for any person who provides feedback and/or makes complaints;
- demonstrate continuous improvement in complaints and feedback management through regular review of complaint and feedback policies and procedures, seeking of participant views on the accessibility of the complaints management and resolution system, and incorporation of feedback throughout the organisation;
- ensure that no person is adversely affected because they made a complaint;
- ensure that complaints and feedback are recorded and used to drive continuous improvement; and
- ensure all workers are aware of, trained in, and comply with the required procedures in relation to complaints handling.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all workers of **Happy To Help Care Services**, including permanent, part-time and casual employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, students on placement and members of the governing body;
- all participants receiving supports or services from **Happy To Help Care Services**, and their families, carers, friends, advocates and other representatives; and
- any other person who wishes to provide feedback or make a complaint to or about **Happy To Help Care Services**, including members of the public.

This policy covers all feedback and complaints about **Happy To Help Care Services** supports, services, workers and operations, however the feedback or complaint is made, including compliments, suggestions, concerns, anonymous complaints and complaints made on behalf of another person.

Where a complaint raises an issue that is an incident, including a reportable incident, the *Incident Management Policy and Procedure* applies in addition to this policy. Disclosures of wrongdoing that attract whistleblower protections are managed under the *Whistleblower Policy and Procedure*. The handling of personal information obtained through feedback and complaints is governed by the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*, and the broader continuous improvement system that complaint data feeds into is described in the

Quality Management Policy and Procedure. This policy does not duplicate those documents; it cross-references them where they apply.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Advocate	A person who, with the authority of the participant, represents the participant's interests. An advocate may be an independent advocate under a Commonwealth, State or Territory advocacy program, or an informal advocate such as a family member or friend chosen by the participant to support them.
Anonymous complaint	A complaint made without the complainant providing their name or contact details. Anonymous complaints are accepted and managed under this policy, although the ability to investigate, provide procedural fairness and advise the complainant of the outcome may be limited.
Complainant	The person making a complaint. Any person can make a complaint to Happy To Help Care Services about the supports or services it provides, including participants, their families, carers, friends and advocates, workers and members of the public.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its supports, services, workers or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Complaints management and resolution system	The system that Happy To Help Care Services must implement and maintain under Part 2 of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018, comprising this policy and procedure, the associated forms and registers, and the roles, training, records and review arrangements that support them.
Complaints Officer	The person appointed by Happy To Help Care Services to oversee the receipt, management and resolution of feedback and complaints under this policy.
Compliment	An expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about an individual worker, a team or a service.
Confidential complaint	A complaint in which the complainant provides their details but asks that information that would identify them not be shared with others involved in the complaint.

Feedback	Information provided about supports, services or a person's performance that is used as a basis for improvement, including compliments, suggestions, concerns and comments. A complaint is a form of feedback that expects a response or resolution.
Incident	An act, omission, event or circumstance that occurred, or is alleged to have occurred, in connection with the provision of supports or services and that has, or could have, caused harm to a person with disability, as further defined in the <i>Incident Management Policy and Procedure</i> .
Natural justice	The common law principles of fair decision-making: the person affected by a decision is given a fair hearing, the decision-maker is unbiased, and the decision is based on evidence.
NDIS Commission	The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, the independent Commonwealth agency that regulates NDIS providers and workers, including the handling of complaints about the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.
NDIS Commissioner	The Commissioner of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, who receives and deals with complaints under Part 3 of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.
Participant	A person with disability who receives supports or services from Happy To Help Care Services , whether or not they are a participant in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
Procedural fairness	Acting fairly in decision-making processes that may adversely affect a person's rights or interests. It requires that people are informed of matters that may be decided against them, are given a reasonable opportunity to be heard before adverse action is taken, and that decisions are made by an unbiased decision-maker on the basis of the facts.
Reconsideration	The formal process under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018 by which a complainant, an affected person with disability, or in some cases a provider or worker, may ask the NDIS Commissioner to reconsider certain decisions about a complaint.
Reportable incident	An incident of a category that must be notified to the NDIS Commission under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, as set out in the <i>Incident Management Policy and Procedure</i> .

Worker	Any person employed or otherwise engaged by Happy To Help Care Services , including employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers and students on placement.
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POLICY STATEMENT

Happy To Help Care Services welcomes complaints and other feedback from participants, workers and all other parties, and treats them with respect. We are committed to ensuring that each participant has knowledge of and access to our complaints management and resolution system, and that every complaint is acknowledged, assessed and resolved in a fair, efficient and timely manner.

Happy To Help Care Services maintains a complaints management and resolution system that is relevant and proportionate to the scope and complexity of the supports we deliver and the size and scale of our organisation. The system follows the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and complies with the requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.

Any person can make a complaint to us, including anonymously, through an easy and accessible process. We provide appropriate support and assistance to any person who wishes to make, or has made, a complaint, including support to contact the NDIS Commission. Information about how to make a complaint to **Happy To Help Care Services** and how to make a complaint to the NDIS Commissioner is readily available and accessible to the public.

No person will be adversely affected, disadvantaged or victimised because they have made a complaint or are affected by an issue raised in a complaint. Attempting to threaten, intimidate or prevent a person from making a complaint is against the law and will not be tolerated. Information provided in a complaint is kept confidential and is only disclosed if required by law or if the disclosure is otherwise appropriate in the circumstances.

Happy To Help Care Services uses feedback and complaints to drive continuous improvement. We regularly review our complaint and feedback policies and procedures, seek participant views on the accessibility of our complaints management and resolution system, and incorporate what we learn from feedback throughout the organisation.

PROCEDURE

The following procedure operationalises **Happy To Help Care Services** complaints management and resolution system so that each participant has knowledge of and access to the system, and complaints and other feedback made by all parties are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and well-managed.

Throughout this procedure, resolution practice follows the four elements of successful complaint resolution described in the NDIS Commission's Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers: acknowledgment, answers, action and apology.

1. The Complaints Management and Resolution System

Happy To Help Care Services must implement and maintain a complaints management and resolution system that complies with Part 2 of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018. The system comprises this policy and procedure, the *Complaint Report Form*, the *Feedback and Complaints Register*, the roles, training and record-keeping arrangements described below, and the continuous improvement processes that act on what complaints reveal.

The system must:

- be relevant and proportionate to the scope and complexity of supports delivered and the size and scale of the organisation;
- enable any person to make a complaint to **Happy To Help Care Services** about the supports or services we provide, including an anonymous complaint;
- provide an easy and accessible process for making and resolving complaints, which may vary depending on the nature of the complaint;
- ensure appropriate support and assistance is provided to any person who wishes to make, or has made, a complaint;
- require that complaints are acknowledged, assessed and resolved in a fair, efficient and timely manner and that appropriate action is taken in relation to issues raised;
- afford procedural fairness to all people involved in a complaint;
- keep complainants and affected persons with disability appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint and informed of its progress; and
- provide for the periodic review of the system to ensure its effectiveness.

Happy To Help Care Services must document the system and provide copies of this policy, and the information about how to complain to **Happy To Help Care Services** and to the NDIS Commissioner, in forms that are accessible to participants and their families, carers and advocates, and to every worker. The **Managing Director and/or their delegate** must ensure workers and participants are assisted to understand how the system operates.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body is accountable for the effectiveness of the complaints management and resolution system. It must ensure the system is resourced, receive reporting on complaint trends, systemic issues and improvement actions **at least quarterly**, and satisfy itself that complaints are being managed in accordance with this policy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.

Management

The **Managing Director and/or their delegate** is responsible for the operation of the complaints management and resolution system, including appointing the Complaints Officer, ensuring public availability of complaint information, ensuring workers are trained, and ensuring complaint outcomes feed into continuous improvement. Where a complaint is about the Complaints Officer or the **Managing Director and/or their delegate**, the complaint must be managed by an alternative senior person nominated by the Governing Body so that no person investigates a complaint about themselves.

Complaints Officer

The Complaints Officer oversees the receipt, management and resolution of feedback and complaints. The Complaints Officer must:

- ensure every complaint is acknowledged, registered, assessed, investigated where required, resolved and closed in accordance with this procedure;
- ensure complainants and affected participants are supported, kept involved and kept informed throughout;
- ensure procedural fairness is afforded to all parties, and nominate an impartial complaint handler where the Complaints Officer has a conflict of interest or cannot manage the complaint;
- maintain the *Feedback and Complaints Register* and the confidentiality of complaint records;
- refer complaints to external bodies where required by law, and support any person to contact the NDIS Commission; and
- analyse complaints for trends and systemic issues and report them into the continuous improvement process.

All Workers

Every worker must comply with the complaints management and resolution system. All workers must welcome feedback and complaints, must be able to explain how to make a complaint to **Happy To Help Care Services** and to the NDIS Commissioner, must offer to record a complaint on a person's behalf, must pass every complaint they receive to the Complaints Officer without delay, and must never discourage, obstruct or penalise any person for complaining.

3. Informing Participants and the Public

Each participant must be provided with information on how to give feedback or make a complaint, including avenues external to **Happy To Help Care Services** and their right to access advocates. This information must be provided:

- at the commencement of services, through the *Service Agreement* and the *Participant Handbook*;

- in a format the participant can understand, including Easy Read, translated, large print or verbally explained versions appropriate to the participant's communication needs, with interpreter support arranged where required;
- again whenever services are reviewed, when a complaint is raised, when services end or when a participant transitions to another provider; and
- at any time on request.

Information about how a complaint can be made to **Happy To Help Care Services** and how a complaint can be made to the NDIS Commissioner must be readily available and accessible to the public, including being displayed or available at **Happy To Help Care Services** premises and provided with the *Complaint Report Form*.

Workers must create a supportive environment for any person who provides feedback and/or makes complaints, and must reassure participants that making a complaint will not affect the supports and services they receive. Participants have the right to have an advocate, family member or friend support them at any stage, and consent for a person to act on a participant's behalf is recorded using the *Authority to Act as an Advocate Form*.

4. How Feedback and Complaints Can Be Made

Any person can provide feedback or make a complaint at any time, orally or in writing, through any of the following channels:

- **In person or by phone** to any worker, who must offer to record the feedback or complaint on the person's behalf using the *Complaint Report Form* and pass it to the Complaints Officer;
- **Complaint Report Form**, completed by hand or electronically and returned to **Happy To Help Care Services** in person, by post or by email; the form is provided to each participant at service commencement and is available on request and at our premises;
- **Directly to the Complaints Officer:**
 - Full Number : Alexa Brinsley
 - Contact number : 0427 24 661
 - Email address : info@happytohelpcs.com.au
 - Postal address : P.O Box 3008 Wangaratta, Vic 3678
- **Through the Participant Satisfaction Survey** and other feedback activities, which invite comments, suggestions, compliments and concerns; and
- **Anonymously**, by any of the above channels, without providing a name or contact details. Anonymous complaints are registered, assessed and investigated to the extent possible; **Happy To Help Care Services** will act on the issues raised even where it cannot respond to the complainant.

A complaint may also be made on a person's behalf by a family member, carer, friend, advocate or other representative, with the person's consent wherever practicable.

A person does not have to complain to **Happy To Help Care Services** first. Any person may raise an issue or make a complaint directly with the NDIS Commission at any time, as set out in the section Raising a Complaint with the NDIS Commission.

5. Supporting People Who Make Complaints

Happy To Help Care Services must ensure appropriate support and assistance is provided to any person who wishes to make, or has made, a complaint. Support is directed by the person making the complaint and may include:

- assistance to put concerns in writing or to complete the *Complaint Report Form*;
- access to an interpreter through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450, or communication support suited to the person's needs;
- assistance to access an independent advocate, including through the Disability Advocacy Finder at <https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder>, and cooperation with any advocate the person chooses;
- access to a private space, phone or computer to make a complaint or contact external bodies in private; and
- support and assistance to contact the NDIS Commission, including help to use the Commission's online form or phone line.

Support must be provided regardless of whether the complaint is made to **Happy To Help Care Services** or externally, and must continue throughout the handling of the complaint.

6. Receiving, Acknowledging and Recording Complaints

Every complaint, however received, must be referred to the Complaints Officer and entered in the *Feedback and Complaints Register*. Compliments and other feedback are also registered so they can inform improvement and recognition.

The Complaints Officer must acknowledge every complaint in person, by phone or in writing within **one business day** of receipt, unless the complaint is anonymous and no contact details were provided. In acknowledging the complaint, the Complaints Officer or complaint handler must:

- listen genuinely and without interruption, and acknowledge how the situation has affected the person;
- clarify the issues raised and ask what outcome the person is seeking;
- explain the complaint handling process and expected timeframes, and provide the details of a contact person;
- identify the person's support needs, including interpreter, communication support, advocacy or cultural support, and who they would like involved;
- advise the person that the complaint will be treated confidentially and that there will be no adverse consequences for raising it; and
- advise the person how the complaint or issue may be raised with the NDIS Commissioner, and offer support to do so.

7. Assessing, Investigating and Resolving Complaints

The Complaints Officer must assess each complaint promptly, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the issues raised, any risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a participant or other person, and the outcome sought by the complainant. Complaints raising

an immediate risk of harm must be escalated to the **Managing Director and/or their delegate** immediately and managed with the *Risk Management Policy and Procedure* and, where applicable, the *Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Many complaints can be resolved quickly and informally at the point they are received, through explanation, apology or immediate corrective action. Even where a complaint is resolved informally, it must still be recorded in the *Feedback and Complaints Register* together with the resolution achieved.

Where investigation is required, the Complaints Officer must ensure the investigation commences within **three business days** of acknowledgement and that it is proportionate to the issues raised. The investigation must:

- be conducted by an impartial person; a complaint must never be investigated by a person who is the subject of the complaint or who has a conflict of interest;
- gather and consider information from all relevant sources, keeping a written record of evidence provided orally;
- not require the complainant to prove every element of their complaint, although they may be asked to assist by providing documents or explaining what they know; and
- weigh the facts objectively and reach findings soundly based on the evidence.

Happy To Help Care Services aims to resolve every complaint within **21 days** of receipt. This is **Happy To Help Care Services** own service commitment; where a complaint cannot be resolved within this target, the complainant must be told the reasons and the revised expected timeframe. Appropriate action must be taken in relation to every substantiated issue, and may include explaining what happened, rectifying the issue, apologising, changing a practice or procedure, providing training, or taking performance or disciplinary action under the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*.

Throughout the process, the person making the complaint must be appropriately involved in its resolution and kept informed of its progress, including any action taken, the reasons for any decisions made and the options for review of those decisions. Each person with disability affected by an issue raised in the complaint must likewise be kept appropriately informed and involved. On closure, the outcome must be explained to the complainant verbally and in writing, in a style the complainant can understand, addressing each concern raised, and the complainant must be reminded of their right to seek an internal review or to raise the matter with the NDIS Commission.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request an internal review by a senior person not previously involved in the complaint, nominated by the **Managing Director and/or their delegate** or the Governing Body. The reviewer must consider the soundness of the investigation and its findings and advise the complainant of the review outcome in writing. The complainant may raise the matter with the NDIS Commission at any point, whether or not an internal review has occurred.

8. Procedural Fairness and Conflicts of Interest

People must be afforded procedural fairness whenever **Happy To Help Care Services** deals with a complaint, consistent with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018. The Complaints Officer or complaint handler must ensure that:

- any person who may be adversely affected by a finding or action, including a worker who is the subject of a complaint, is given notice of the matters raised against them and a reasonable opportunity to respond before adverse action is taken;
- the complainant is given a reasonable opportunity to be heard and to put forward information and submissions;
- decisions are soundly based on the facts and issues raised during assessment and investigation, and are documented in the complaint outcome; and
- the decision-maker remains unbiased throughout, applying the test of whether a fair-minded observer might reasonably suspect a lack of impartiality.

Where a representative makes a complaint on behalf of a participant, consideration must be given to affording procedural fairness to the participant separately. Where the person handling a complaint has, or appears to have, a conflict of interest or personal stake in the matter, the conflict must be declared and managed under the *Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure* and the complaint reassigned where required. Depending on the circumstances, the obligation to provide procedural fairness may override, in whole or in part, the obligation to maintain confidentiality; any such disclosure must be limited to what fairness requires.

9. Protection from Adverse Action and Confidentiality

Happy To Help Care Services must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person who makes a complaint, and any person with disability affected by an issue raised in a complaint, is not adversely affected as a result of the complaint being made. Retaliation, victimisation or any other detrimental treatment of a complainant, participant or worker in connection with a complaint is misconduct and will be dealt with under the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*.

Information provided in a complaint must be kept confidential and disclosed only to people with a genuine role in resolving the complaint, and otherwise only if required by law or if the disclosure is appropriate in the circumstances, as assessed by the Complaints Officer. Complaint records are managed in accordance with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure*.

A complainant may ask for their identity to be kept confidential. Their wishes must be respected to the greatest extent consistent with procedural fairness and safety; where full confidentiality cannot be maintained, this must be discussed with the complainant before any disclosure is made.

Workers who disclose wrongdoing may be protected whistleblowers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, as amended by the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Act 2026, and under the *Whistleblower*

Policy and Procedure. A complaint that meets the criteria for a protected disclosure must be handled consistently with that policy in addition to this procedure.

10. Complaints Involving Incidents or Unlawful Conduct

Where a complaint raises an issue that is an incident, including a reportable incident, the Complaints Officer must ensure the matter is also managed through the incident management system in accordance with the *Incident Management Policy and Procedure* and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, including notification of reportable incidents to the NDIS Commission within the required timeframes.

Where a complaint suggests a criminal offence may have been committed, the matter must be referred to the Police, and the complainant, the affected participant and any other person involved must be given adequate support during any Police involvement. A complaint must also be referred or notified to any other body where required by Commonwealth, State or Territory law, including reporting obligations to the relevant State or Territory bodies, e.g. worker screening unit, child protection agency, public guardian.

11. Raising a Complaint with the NDIS Commission

Any person can raise an issue or make a complaint about the quality or safety of NDIS supports and services, or about an NDIS provider or worker, directly with the NDIS Commission at any time. A person does not need to complain to **Happy To Help Care Services** first, does not need **Happy To Help Care Services** permission, and will always be supported by **Happy To Help Care Services** to contact the Commission if they wish.

The NDIS Commission's participant pathway for reporting an issue or making a complaint about a provider or worker is available at:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints/report>. This link must be retained in this policy and in participant-facing complaint information so participants can access the pathway directly.

A complaint or report can be made to the NDIS Commission by:

- completing the online complaint form at www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints-form, reached from the pathway page above;
- phoning 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677; the Commission's contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (7:30 am to 3:30 pm in Western Australia), excluding public holidays;
- using the National Relay Service and asking for 1800 035 544;
- calling the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and asking them to contact the NDIS Commission on 1800 035 544; or
- writing to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2751.

A person can choose for their report to the Commission to be anonymous (the Commission does not collect or record their name or contact details, and cannot provide updates or

outcomes) or confidential (the Commission does not share information that would identify them with others involved, and can provide information about progress). Easy Read information about reporting issues is available from the Commission's pathway page. If a person is at immediate risk of harm, call 000.

When the Commission receives a complaint, it undertakes a risk-based assessment and may close the complaint, give assistance and advice, require the provider to take certain actions, or undertake a resolution process such as conciliation. The Commission gives written notice of its decisions, and a complainant or affected person with disability who is dissatisfied with certain decisions may apply to the NDIS Commissioner for reconsideration within 42 days of being notified. **Happy To Help Care Services** must cooperate fully with the NDIS Commission in relation to any complaint, including complying with any requirement to take action, participating in any resolution process in good faith, and cooperating with any advocate or representative supporting the complainant.

Complaints about NDIA decisions, NDIS plans or plan funding are a matter for the National Disability Insurance Agency rather than the NDIS Commission; workers must help participants direct such concerns to the NDIA.

12. Records and Reporting to the Commissioner

The Complaints Officer must keep appropriate records of every complaint received, including the information about the complaint, any action taken to resolve it, and the outcome of that action. All complaint records, including the *Complaint Report Form*, correspondence, investigation material and outcome advice, must be linked to the entry in the *Feedback and Complaints Register* and stored securely in accordance with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure* and the *Information Management Policy and Procedure*.

Complaint records must be kept for 7 years from the day the record is made. Longer retention periods under other Commonwealth, State or Territory laws must be observed where they apply.

Happy To Help Care Services must collect statistical and other information about the complaints it receives so that it can review the issues raised, identify and address systemic issues, and report information relating to complaints to the NDIS Commissioner if requested to do so. The Complaints Officer prepares this reporting.

13. Training and Competence

All workers must be aware of, trained in, and comply with the required procedures in relation to complaints handling. Training in this policy and procedure must be provided:

- at induction, before a worker delivers supports, as recorded in the *Staff Induction Checklist*;
- as refresher training **at least annually**, scheduled through the *Staff Training Plan* and recorded in the *Training Attendance Record*; and
- whenever this policy or the complaints management and resolution system materially changes.

Training must cover how to receive and record feedback and complaints respectfully, the no-detriment obligations, procedural fairness, confidentiality, how to support a person to complain to the NDIS Commission, and the escalation steps in this procedure. The Complaints Officer and any person who handles complaints must also be trained in investigation and resolution practice. Understanding of complaints handling responsibilities is assessed through supervision and performance review under the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*.

14. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

Happy To Help Care Services must demonstrate continuous improvement in complaints and feedback management. The Complaints Officer, with the **Managing Director and/or their delegate**, must:

- review this policy, the associated procedures and the effectiveness of the complaints management and resolution system **at least annually** and after any significant complaint, using the review to test whether complaints were acknowledged, assessed and resolved fairly, efficiently and in a timely manner;
- seek participant views on the accessibility of the complaints management and resolution system, including through the *Participant Satisfaction Survey*, and act on what participants say;
- analyse the *Feedback and Complaints Register* **at least quarterly** for trends, recurring issues and systemic risks, and report the analysis to the Governing Body;
- record improvement actions arising from feedback and complaints in the *Continuous Improvement Register* using the *Continuous Improvement Form*, and track them through the *Continuous Improvement Plan* in accordance with the *Quality Management Policy and Procedure*; and
- incorporate feedback throughout the organisation, including through team meetings, where feedback and complaints are a standing agenda item, and through internal audits under the *Internal Audit Program*.

Outcomes of complaint reviews, participant feedback on the system's accessibility, and resulting improvements are reported to workers and, where appropriate, to participants, so that people can see that their feedback leads to change.

15. Document Control and Review

This policy and procedure is a controlled document. It must be reviewed **at least every two years**, and earlier where there is a change to the NDIS Practice Standards, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018 or related legislation, a relevant NDIS Commission alert or guidance, a systemic issue identified through complaints, or an audit or review finding that affects this document. The Managing Director approves this document and all changes to it. Superseded versions are retired and archived in accordance with the *Document Control Register*.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators for NDIS Practice Standards) Guidelines 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Act 2026 (Cth)
- Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- **{{[State or Territory Legislation - Disability Services]}}**

RELATED INFORMATION

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, Core Module, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Report an Issue or Make a Complaint About a Provider or Worker webpage, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Easy Read: Reporting Issues About Providers and Workers, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- NDIS Code of Conduct guidance for providers and workers, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide, 2023 edition, Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Disability Advocacy Finder, Ask Izzy

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaint Report Form
- Feedback and Complaints Register
- Participant Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Service Agreement
- Participant Satisfaction Survey

- Authority to Act as an Advocate Form
- Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Incident Register
- Incident Report Form
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure
- Whistleblower Policy and Procedure
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure
- Rights and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure
- Quality Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Information Management Policy and Procedure
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Continuous Improvement Register
- Continuous Improvement Form
- Internal Audit Program
- Staff Training Plan
- Training Attendance Record
- Staff Induction Checklist
- Document Control Register

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