

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1 Policy statement

Concern Australia is committed to providing safe and effective services and to continuous improvement of those services. Feedback and complaints provide valuable information and give us opportunities to learn and improve.

We will provide a range of ways for people to provide feedback or to make a complaint, including anonymously.

Concern Australia will listen carefully to complaints and is committed to handling all complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. We will be helpful and respectful in responding.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all workers, contractors, and Board members receiving or managing complaints from clients and the public regarding our services, our workers, or our complaint handling process.

3 Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to us or about us, our services, our workers or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or required.
Feedback	Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, about our services or complaint handling system, where a response or resolution is not explicitly or implicitly expected or required.

4 Responsibilities

All workers	<p>Act in accordance with Concern Australia's values.</p> <p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints to access our complaints process.</p> <p>Record all complaints received on a Quality/Incident Report, even if resolved immediately.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist other workers handling complaints to resolve matters promptly.</p>
Quality, Risk and Compliance Officer	<p>Record all complaints in the Complaints Register.</p> <p>Analyse and report on complaints.</p>

CEO/Executive
Team

Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution.

Provide adequate support and direction to staff responsible for handling complaints.

Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and to assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.

Encourage staff to make recommendations for system or process improvements.

Review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.

Report to the Board on our complaint handling.

5 Guidelines

5.1 Guiding principles

Complaint handling must be aligned to Concern Australia's values and based on the principles of:

- Fairness
- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Responsiveness
- Efficiency
- Integration into organisational culture

5.2 Making a complaint

People making complaints will be provided with information about the complaint handling process and how to access it. We accept anonymous complaints. There is no charge for making a complaint.

Complaints may be submitted in the following ways:

By phone:	03 9470 2972
By email:	feedback@concernaustralia.org.au
Through our website:	www.concernaustralia.org.au
By post to:	Quality, Risk & Compliance Officer Concern Australia PO Box 1040 Robinson VIC 3019
To your key contact in Concern Australia	Verbally, via email or in writing

We prefer that complaints are made to us in the first instance so that we can investigate and address the complaint. However, you have the right to make a complaint to one of the following organisations where appropriate:

- Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission
- Commission for Children and Young People
- eSafety Commissioner
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
- Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commissioner

5.3 Assistance in making a complaint

People may be assisted in making a complaint. Workers should be ready to explain the complaint process to clients who have difficulty understanding written information.

People who wish to make a complaint may ask another person to assist them or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint. This may include a guardian, advocate, interpreter, family member, friend, legal or community representative, member of Parliament or another organisation. That person's authority to act for the person making the complaint should be provided in writing.

5.4 Prioritisation of complaints

We will resolve complaints at first contact, where possible. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

If complaints are unable to be resolved immediately, we will assess and investigate complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issue raised and allocate clear responsibility for dealing with the complaint.

5.5 Responding to a complaint

We will acknowledge receipt of complaints within two working days and provide information about the complaints process, including expected timeframes.

We will ask complainants for their desired outcome and preferred method of communication.

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws and confidentiality obligations.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them, or on their behalf.

5.6 Integrity of complaints handling process

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflict of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, any internal review of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

5.7 Confidentiality

We will maintain confidentiality of the complainant and any person complained of as far as possible. It may be necessary, however, to speak with other people to provide integrity in any investigation process, afford fairness to those who are the subject of a complaint and to resolve the complaint. Where potentially unlawful conduct has occurred, Concern Australia may need to notify the appropriate authorities.

5.8 Communication

We will assign an organisational representative who will keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaint and any reasons for delay.

The organisational representative will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two business days, explaining the steps to be taken in resolving the complaint.

If we are unable to deal with any part of a complaint, we will advise people as soon as this becomes apparent and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

When we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint, we will advise people as soon as this becomes apparent, and communicate the reason for our delay.

Following consideration and/or investigation of the complaint, we will communicate:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason(s) for our decision
- The remedy or resolution(s) that we have proposed or put in place
- Options for internal or external review.

within two working days of finalising the response.

5.9 Recording and monitoring

We will maintain records of complaints and outcomes which will be reported to the CEO/Executive Team and the Board. We will continually monitor our complaint management system to ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints.

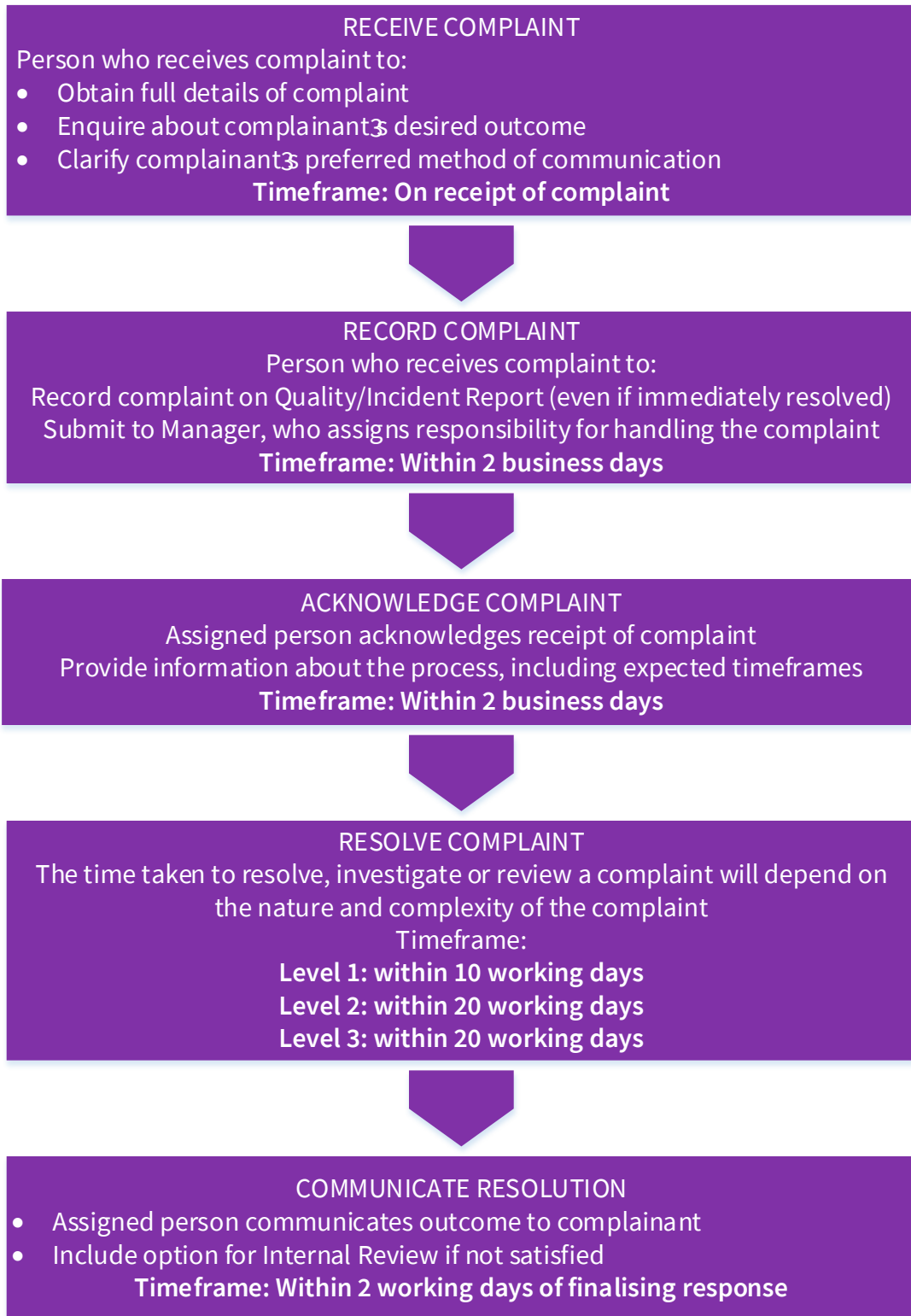
6 Procedure

6.1 Overview of complaint management

The following provides an overview of complaint management. If a complaint is sufficiently serious or complex it may be immediately escalated to Level 2.



6.2 Complaint management process



Version control

Issue date	Version	Author	Reviewer/Approver	Description of Changes
14/01/2019	1.0	M Wells	Executive Team	New policy
14/04/2021	2.0	M Wells	Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add making complaint to key contact in organisation • Include obligation to act in certain circumstances • Updated logo and formatting
06/09/2023	2.1	M Wells	Executive Team	Addition of external agencies

Related documents

Relevant legislation/standards	Associated policies/forms
<p><i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Human Services Standards</i></p> <p><i>AS ISO 10002:2014 Complaint handling in organisations</i></p> <p><i>Commonwealth Ombudsman, Better practice guide to complaint handling</i></p> <p><i>ACNC Factsheet, Complaint handling by charities and not-for-profits</i></p>	<p>Quality/Incident Report</p> <p>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</p> <p>Client handbooks</p> <p>Complaints Register</p> <p>Improvements Register</p>