

PURPOSE

This policy's purpose is to provide employees and stakeholders with directions on the Nextt approach to complaints management. It aims to inform and explain Nextt's policy and procedure regarding feedback and its value in being an organisation that learns from itself. The policy and procedure outlines Nextt's response to feedback and the emphasis on client centred outcomes and continuous improvement.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all feedback and complaints from clients, families, key supports, advocates, statutory bodies, government agencies, stakeholders, employees or members of the public. It does not cover internal complaints or grievances.

DEFINITIONS

Client Management System – The Nextt database is RiskMan

Complaint – A term that covers all concerns and grievances raised by any person other than an employee. It may be a formal, written complaint or a concern raised informally. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complainant - A term for the person/party making the complaint.

Feedback – Complaints, compliments and suggestions are all types of feedback.

Quality & Risk Committee - the Executive sub committee for Quality governance

Managers – Client Experience Manager, Senior Manager Client Experience, House Leader, Finance Manager, General Manager.

Nextt – Nextt Group is currently made up of Nextt and Dolleina.

POLICY

Nextt has a proactive approach to complaints management that safeguards clients and their supports from retributive action when raising complaints. We welcome, and seek, feedback from Clients, their families, key supports and/or advocates, about any concerns they may have and recognises their rights of review. Feedback can be made in any format including anonymously.

Nextt is committed to protecting the **Rights** of Clients and the promotion of Quality Services. Feedback enables us to correct any problems with our service, improve our relationship with our clients and improve the overall quality of our services.

Nextt's policy is to use the 7 steps for Complaint Handling (Procedure is in this document) to:



Acknowledge



Risk Assessment



Plan



Investigation



Response



Review



Monitor

Acknowledge

- Within 24 Hours - verbally or in writing an acknowledge of receiving Complaint.
- Within 76 Hours - In writing with a response on steps that will be taken to address complaint
- Within 21 Days – In writing either an update on Complaint status or outcomes of that complaint including

Risk Assess – Are any immediate actions required to ensure the safety of the client? Does this meet the criteria for an external and/or internal incident report. Who is best positioned to complete the investigation and follow up?

Plan – Plan the investigation in line with the level of risk and in line with the investigation manual requirements for who should lead that investigation. Communicate this plan to the complainant and update them at key junctures.

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Investigation – Investigation processes to be followed and draft report generated within timeframes. Client voice should be represented in investigation process with due consideration of CALD And Communication differences.

Response – A summary of the actions taken and findings, including proposed actions for review by complainant with an opportunity for them to respond to their satisfaction with the investigation, findings and proposed actions.

Review – once the actions arising have been endorsed, they are briefed into relevant individuals within Nextt who then have the responsibility to close out this action, communicate this to a central point of contact who will then communicate this to client.

Monitor – Investigation Action plans are monitored through line management supervision in operations and at monthly quality meetings.

Key Actions:

- Resolve a client or stakeholder complaint as quickly as possible at the local level including authenticating the complainant (because there may be Privacy issues)
- **Take immediate action where there appears to be a substantial risk of harm, neglect, or abuse to the client**
- Acknowledge complaints within 24 hours of receipt (preferably same day and always the same day is there is significant risk of harm)
- Call (or contact via the preferred method) the complainant or support person or stakeholder within 36 hours of acknowledgement to update progress,
 - Resolve complaints within 21 calendar days

RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees are responsible for being aware of this policy and procedure and for reporting and feedback in the procedure as demonstrated in the flowchart in this document.

GMT (Group Management Team) are responsible for resolving all complaints by liaising with the relevant parties and to support the team as appropriate. Managers are also responsible for using compliments, complaints, or suggestions to enhance and develop services, and for reporting actions to their line manager.

CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and GLT are responsible for all communications with the external agencies and may delegate authority to the respective General Manager or GMT member.

General Manager Q&R is responsible for monitoring all complaints, conducting trend analysis, supporting serious complaints the GLT (Group Leadership Team) and report any trends to the Quality & Risk Committee & Audit Committee/Board.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Compliments, complaints, and suggestions that affect/benefit other areas/programs of the Nextt, are to be raised for the Continuous Improvement Register

REPORTS

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All Nextt Clients are provided with information about making compliments, complaints, and suggestions in their “Client Handbook” which is provided when Nextt first engage with them. This includes information on external advocates and alternate avenues to raise their complaints e.g., National Quality and Safeguards Commission, the Disability Services Commissioner (VIC).

External complaints are to be reported according to the relevant funding body supporting the client.

Nextt employees are trained to be aware that, for people from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, CALD (Cultural and Linguistic Diversity) backgrounds, or who identify as LGTBI, may affect how they feel to participate in a complaint process.

COMPLIMENTS – records are to be kept of all compliments and forwarded to relevant employees including care and support workers. Include Managers when appropriate for process enhancement opportunities.

SUGGESTIONS – External Feedback can be recorded as per the details on the website

COMPLAINTS – a summary of the complaint procedure is in the [Complaint Management Flowchart](#) (also is on the next page). Use the Risk Matrix and **Riskman** to grade and classify the category of Complaint.

Nextt encourages employees providing direct client services to actively resolve any client’s concerns they encounter in the first instance

The following complaint **guidelines** apply:

- Records are to be kept of all complaints raised, contacts with complainants, action taken and outcomes reached for a minimum of 7 years.
- Complaint documentation will be made available to complainants upon request (except that which may violate the confidentiality of other individuals or the organisation) and employees must keep this in mind when records are made – if in doubt seek guidance from the relevant Gen/Grp Manager.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained at all times, and complaints will only be discussed with employees on a need-to-know basis.
- Any complaint involving an illegal action will be referred to the appropriate authority.
- An employee against whom an allegation is made shall be given the opportunity to have their say. If the allegation is unsubstantiated, any record shall be removed from their personal file.
- Complaints (non-staff) may be made anonymously.
- Category 2 or category 3 complaints are locally managed at the relevant regional/business unit site.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the way Nextt is handling their complaint, the following external contacts are available for funded services:

National:

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:

A complaint can be made to the NDIS

Commission by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.

- [National Relay Service](#) and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a [complaint contact form](#).

Disability Gateway: www.disabilitygateway.gov.au

Commonwealth Ombudsman

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Web: www.ombudsman.gov.au/pages/making-a-complaint/

1300 362 072

South Australia:

Health and Community Services Complaints commissioner: Ph: 1800 232 007 or online <https://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/making-a-complaint/raise-a-complaint-with-hcsc/>

Queensland

Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

phone 1800 491 467 or online

<https://www.complaints.services.qld.gov.au/>

NSW

NSW Ombudsmen: PH: 1800 451 524 or online

<http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>

Victoria

Disability Services Commissioner: Ph: 1800 677 342 or online

<https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint/how-to-make-a-complaint/>