

G-PO-09 Feedback and Complaints Policy

Policy Area	Quality
Policy Number	G-PO-09
Version	5
Approval Date	3 April 2025
Review Date	April 2028
Scope	All employees, trainees, contractors and volunteers
NDIS Practice Standards and Legislation	<p><i>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018 National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018</i></p> <p>NDIS Practice Standards- Provider Governance and Operational Management: Feedback and Complaints Management</p>

Policy

HomePlace welcomes any feedback and suggestions for improvement that could be made to any aspect of HomePlace services. We are committed to ensuring that any participant or organisation using our services or affected by our work has the right to provide feedback, including making a complaint. All concerns that are raised will be addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency. Our complaint management process:

- supports any person to make a complaint or provide feedback
- facilitates communication of feedback, including complaints, by cultivating a culture that is supportive and encouraging of them to be made
- is simple, accessible and easy to use
- is effectively communicated and promoted to all participants and stakeholders
- ensures complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with legislative requirements.

This policy is not applicable to employee grievances which should be addressed using the Employee Grievance Policy (HR-12).

Definitions

Complaint: is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about HomePlace regarding our staff, services or supports that warrants investigation and a response, resolution or improvement action.

The person making a complaint, sometimes called the 'Complainant': is a participant, advocate, stakeholder or member of the public who expresses their dissatisfaction about HomePlace to either HomePlace or an external body.

Escalation: is the process of reporting complaints to the HomePlace Chief Executive, the Board Chair, or to an external body such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission if the person making a complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Principles

HomePlace will:

- ensure that all participants, and their families, carers and advocates are encouraged and supported to provide feedback about the supports they receive or their experience of HomePlace, especially if they have concerns
- consider all complaints it receives regardless of whether or not the complainant is a participant supported by HomePlace
- treat all people who make a complaint with respect, recognising that the issue of complaint is important to them
- respond to any report of perceived racial, cultural or human rights abuse following the same pathway as priority complaint investigation and management
- maintain confidentiality of everyone involved, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution. (Information will only be disclosed if required by law, or if otherwise necessary).
- ensure support and advocacy is available to participants who make a complaint and require support
- resolve complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant
- participants, families and advocates have access to and are aware of the HomePlace Feedback and Complaints management policy
- deal with all complaints in a timely manner, and aim to provide an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the person making the complaint within 3 business days of it being received
- keep parties to the complaint appropriately involved and informed of progress of the complaint
- ensure that Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors are given information about the Complaints policy as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing participant feedback and complaints
- ensure that all complainants are aware of and understand how to escalate their complaint to the Chief Executive, the Board Chair, and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- ensure that a person making a complaint is not penalised in any way or prevented from access to supports during the progress of an issue

- ensure that feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in HomePlace organisational reviews and in planning service improvements
- review and evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of the feedback and complaints management system and continually improve its processes

Roles and responsibilities

HomePlace Board

- The HomePlace Board delegates to the Chief Executive operational responsibility for the delivery of outcomes in accordance with this policy.
- The HomePlace Board Chair may receive feedback, including complaints, from any participant or stakeholder, if they are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint investigation process and associated decision by the HomePlace Chief Executive.

Chief Executive

- The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective operationalization of this policy. This includes:
 - Ensuring an up to date Feedback and Complaint Policy is in place and is in alignment with NDIS Practice Standards and Legislation
 - Ensuring all staff are educated on HomePlace's Feedback and Complaints Policy, and associated processes and tools at their induction to HomePlace.

Executive Manager Participant Services and Quality; and Senior Coordinators

- Reporting of any complaints communicated to them, via the Incident Reporting App.
- Effectively communicating the Feedback and Complaints Policy and process to all new and existing participants, including via the use of Easy Read/easy English versions, and video where appropriate.
- Coordinating complaint investigations, when they are not the subject of the complaint
- Ensuring that HomePlace staff are re-oriented to the Feedback and Complaints Policy, procedure and process, including supportive materials to be provided to participants, annually or more frequently if required.

Senior Support Workers

- Reporting of any complaints communicated to them, via the Incident Reporting App
- Effectively communicating the Feedback and Complaints Policy to all new and existing participants and their families including plain English and easy English versions, and video, where appropriate.
- Contributing to investigations where required
- Re-orienting staff to the Feedback and Complaints Policy, procedure and process, including supportive materials to be provided to participants, annually or more frequently if required

Support workers and HomePlace Office staff

- Ensuring they are familiar with the Feedback and Complaints policy, complaints framework and the procedures for reporting via the Incident Reporting App and managing a complaint, including easy Read/easy English versions and video for participants
- Assisting participants and their families with the necessary information to enable them to make a complaint if needed.
- Contributing to a complaints investigation.

All staff

All staff must ensure that participants are able and supported to make a complaint.

If the complaint concerns a staff member, this can be drawn immediately to the supervisor's attention.

Participants wishing to make a confidential complaint can be assisted to contact the Executive Manager Participant Services and Quality, or another senior staff member, or Chief Executive.

Participants and/or their family members wishing to make an anonymous complaint should be directed to the HomePlace website that has a function for this purpose.

It is essential that each person employed or otherwise engaged by HomePlace understands and is able to utilise HomePlace's complaints management and resolution system.

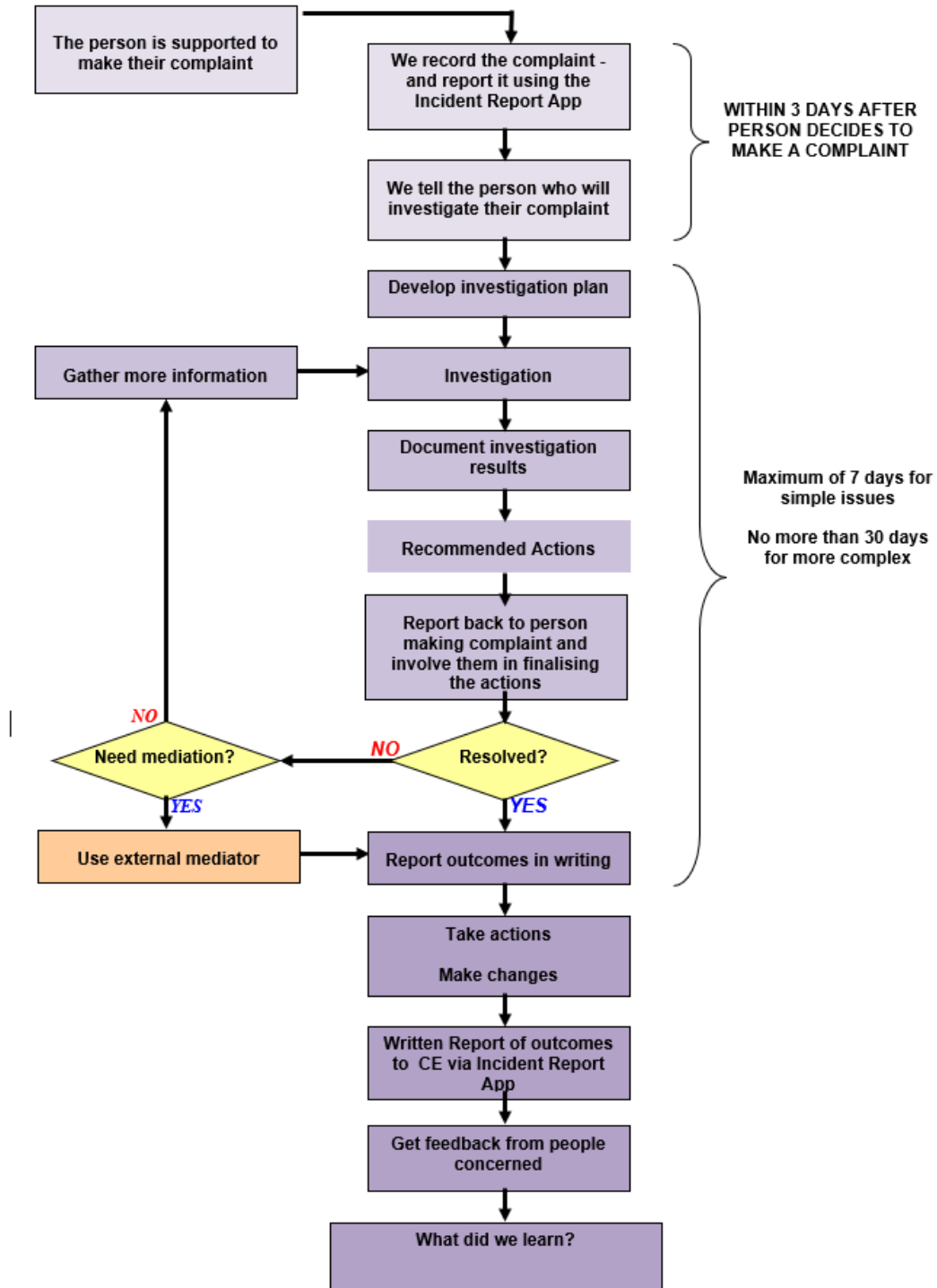
How to make a complaint

Information for participants and stakeholders

Information will be presented to participants using Easy Read/Easy English, and video, wherever possible.

The complaint process

The Flow Chart below summarises the process:



Complaints are discussed only with the people involved in the investigation and/or to resolve the complaint.

Informed consent for the sharing of information will be obtained and respected unless

- it is unsafe or impossible to obtain consent
- without information being shared it is anticipated a vulnerable person will be at risk of serious harm, abuse or neglect or pose a risk to their own or public safety.

Every complaint will be recorded and followed up.

Please refer to the Complaints Procedure for guidance on how HomePlace will undertake the Complaint process.

Outcome of the complaint

HomePlace believes that the outcome of complaints assists us to improve services.

Regardless of the outcome of the investigation a senior representative will arrange to report back to the person making the complaint and discuss the resolution.

Wherever possible the outcome will also be given in writing to the individual.

Sometimes the person making the complaint may not be happy with the outcome. If this is the case, they should be encouraged to lodge an appeal about the outcome or decision with the Chief Executive or via the Board Chair.

After a complaint has been resolved

HomePlace will reflect on the complaints process and any outcomes incurred. This includes checking in with the person who made the complaint for feedback around the finalisation of their complaint, and their response to any follow up or implementation of actions.

This requirement is fundamental to the proper functioning of complaints management and resolution system as it ensures that persons with disability and their families and carers are aware of their rights and can advocate for their needs and safety where appropriate.

While investigating and resolving a complaint, relevant staff and/or the HomePlace Leadership team will consider following questions contribute to the continuous improvement strategies for HomePlace :

- What was the complaint about? What service, policy or procedure did it call into question?
- What was the experience of the person who made the complaint, or for any affected participant? Were the issues resolved for them?
- Can we identify and improve those services, policies and procedures and HomePlace as a whole?

- How effectively did we communicate with the person who made the complaint, any affected participants, affected staff and other stakeholders?
- Did participants, their families and friends require more or improved information about their rights and the complaints process? Does the person who made the complaint feel more comfortable about speaking up in the future?
- Does anything need to change in HomePlace's complaints handling system or approach to dealing with complaints?
- Do staff require further training?
- Did the handling of the complaint reflect our stated values and expectations for complaint handling? Or, was the complaint perceived as something negative that needed to be dealt with as quickly as possible?

Unresolved complaints

Even with the best intentions not all complaints are resolvable.

Even if the complaint cannot be fully resolved, it is critical that the person who made the complaint feels that they have been listened to; that their opinion was valued; and that everything was done to address their concerns.

Process is as important as outcome and is critical to building and strengthening relationships between participants and HomePlace.

Recording of Complaints

HomePlace will keep and maintain appropriate records of all complaints received, via the Incident Reports App.

This will include, where appropriate:

- information about the complaint
- any action taken to remediate or resolve complaints, and
- the outcome of any action taken.

It is necessary for HomePlace to keep accurate records to enable us to identify any systemic issues and to be able to provide those records to the Board, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner or quality auditor when required.

Information related to individual complaints will be stored in a way that maintains confidentiality.

Complaint record retention

Records must be kept for a minimum of 7 years from the date the record was made.

Related Documents and Further Information

- Feedback and Complaints Policy in Plain English
- Feedback and Complaints Policy in Easy read
- Privacy Policy
- Information Sharing Guidelines

Braden Naylor

Board Chair

28 April 2025

Version control and change history

Version	Date	Change	Approved by
4	21 March 2022	Update to reflect NDIS standards, improved clarity regarding definitions and responsibilities	Julie Bowman CE
5	3 April 2025	Review and inclusion of video as means of communication of How to lodge a complaint	Julie Bowman CE