

Complaints Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to assist Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT (Anglicare) to appropriately manage and respond to complaints from service users, volunteers, community members and stakeholders in a consistent, fair and effective manner.

Scope

This procedure applies to all staff receiving or managing complaints from the public made to or about Anglicare, regarding our services, staff and complaint handling.

Staff grievances or investigation of client allegations of abuse are dealt with in the Workplace Grievance Policy and Procedure and the Allegations of Harm Procedure.

Procedure

1. Complaint management system



1.1 Introduction

When responding to complaints, staff should act in accordance with this procedure and any relevant legislation and/or regulations.

Program staff must verbally explain information about the complaints process to service users, volunteers and any community member/stakeholder who wishes to make a complaint. Explanations must be in a range of accessible formats (including use of interpreters, cultural supports or visual mediums where appropriate).

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

The investigation of and response to a complaint made by or concerning a client who is Aboriginal or from a culturally and linguistically diverse community must ensure cultural safety, sensitivity and wherever possible include community members in the resolution.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below.

1.2 Receipt of complaints

The complaint will be recorded on ISOPro, Anglicare’s online compliance platform. All documents relating to the complaint are to be attached to the ISOPro report. For children and young people in Anglicare’s Out of Home Care Permanency Support Program, the complaint also needs to be recorded in TCM.

The record of the complaint will document:

- the contact information of the person making a complaint
- the date the complaint was received
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

1.3 Acknowledgement of complaints

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within **two** working days.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

1.4 Initial assessment and addressing of complaints

Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people’s health and safety
- Whether the complaint is lodged by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person or someone from a CALD background
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

Addressing complaints

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint we may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- If the complaint/s is from either an Indigenous Australian or CALD background, ensure staff managing the complaint have completed Anglicare’s Cultural Safety training.
- Gather information from the person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

All complaint matters must be resolved with written confirmation of the outcome of the complaint investigation by the responsible manager within 20 business days. In the event that the complaint takes longer than 20 working days to investigate, the investigating staff member must ensure that there is regular contact with the person making the complaint to advise of the progress. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements and/or cultural protocols.

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1.5 Providing reasons for decisions

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- 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, and
- any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

If in the course of investigation, we make any adverse findings about a particular individual, we will consider any applicable privacy obligations under the *Privacy Act 1998* and any applicable exemptions in or made pursuant to that Act, before sharing our findings with the person making the complaint.

1.6 Closing the complaint, record keeping, redress and review

We will keep comprehensive records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, and
- Any outstanding actions that need to be followed up.

A copy of the response letter and any other documentation in relation to a complaint must be attached to the ISOPro report and also retained in the relevant program files. Where confidentiality concerns preclude this, records are maintained by the Anglicare complaint handling manager, with a summary reference to the complaint placed on the local file by the staff member responsible for investigating the complaint.

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager and/or senior management.

1.6 Internal review of complaints

A person who makes a complaint will be given information about the process for having their complaint reviewed internally if they are not happy with the outcome or the handling of the matter. If a person asks for a review of their complaint, this will be undertaken by a staff member who is more senior than the original complaint handler, or a senior manager who is able to review the original decision and take corrective action.

If, during the course of reviewing a complaint, systemic issues or other concerns are identified, relevant senior staff will be notified and steps taken to resolve these issues.

1.7 External review of complaints

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight bodies).

These include the:

NDIS Commission

Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. National Relay Service - ask for 1800 035 544

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/contact-us/makeacomplaint>

NSW Ombudsman
Phone: (02) 9286 1000
Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524
<https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/Making-a-complaint>

NSW Administrative Decision Tribunal
<http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au/>
Telephone 1300 006 228

ACT Public Advocate
Phone: (02) 6207 0707
<https://hrc.act.gov.au/public-advocate/>

ACT Human Rights Commission
Phone: (02) 6205 2222
<http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/>

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
Phone: 1800 550 552
<https://www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au/>

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority
Phone: 1300 422 327
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

1.8 External reporting

We will provide reports about serious complaints to external regulatory bodies such as the NDIS Complaints Commissioner, Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, and the NSW Ombudsman.

2. Accountability and continuous improvement

2.1 Analysis and evaluation of complaints

Complaints will be recorded on ISOPro so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

Regular reports will be run on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints
- systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling.

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to Anglicare's CEO and senior management for review.

All information regarding complaints will be kept confidential amongst the staff concerned with its resolution. Hard copy complaints documentation must be appended to the relevant ISOPro incident report. Access to electronic complaint records will be restricted to authorised staff.

2.2 Monitoring of the complaint management system

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints, and
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.
- Monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

2.3 Continuous improvement

We are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaints management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

2.4 Training

Anglicare managers are responsible for ensuring staff are trained in how to receive, manage and resolve complaints.

Related documents

- Client Rights and Responsibilities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Elder Abuse Policy
- Elder Abuse Procedure
- Investigations Policy
- ISOPro reporting system
- Workplace Grievance Procedure

Relevant Legislation/Guidelines

- Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint handling in organisations AS/NZS 10002:2014
- *Privacy Act 1998*

Feedback

Feedback on this procedure can be submitted to policy@anglicare.com.au.

Compliance

Non compliance with this procedure may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.