



Complaints Procedure

Westgate Community Initiatives Group (WCIG) aims to provide a complaints handling system that is open, effective and easy to use. This procedure outlines the steps to be taken when handling complaints from service users.

The procedure applies to all programs run by and within WCIG; and to all staff employed by WCIG – whether permanent or temporary.

This procedure does not apply to staff grievances or student appeals against assessment decisions.

Receiving the complaint

1. The WCIG staff member contacted by the service user about a concern or complaint, shall clarify the issue and explain the complaints process. If the staff member is a first line staff member, they are to notify the most senior staff member available (e.g. Program Coordinator / Manager/Site Manager).
2. The most senior staff member available shall attempt to resolve the issue. Notes of the complaint/issue are to be taken. The service user is to be provided with a copy of the Complaints Policy upon request as well as information about complaints referral via external agencies.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved, then the WCIG senior staff member shall provide the service user with a Complaint Form (WCIG_F018); and information about External Complaints Handling agencies. Alternatively, the staff member may assist the complainant to [complete the online complaint form](#) and submit it to WCIG.
4. The complainant is to be assured that the complaint will be treated confidentially and impartially and that they will not suffer any loss of service provision whilst the complaint is being investigated.

Registering the complaint and assigning investigating officer

5. The formal complaint is registered on the Incident Management System by the staff member managing the complaint, who communicates written acknowledgment to the complainant within 48 hours. The complaint acknowledgement must include the relevant complaint number generated by the system. If the complaint is about a WCIG staff member then the confidentiality of information registered is to be secured.
6. The Quality Manager or their delegate allocates the complaint to the relevant manager
 - a. If the following questions are ticked 'Yes', the complaint will be directed to the Child Safety Officer for management.
 - i. Does this relate to a person under 18 years old?
 - ii. Does this relate to a safety concern?
7. Where negative feedback is received via survey or other WCIG feedback process and includes the contact details of the service user then the Group Manager or Leadership Team member responsible for the group shall follow up directly with the service user to resolve the issue and the remainder of the complaints procedure is followed as required.

Investigating the Complaint

8. The relevant manager is to investigate the complaint or issue and to make progress notes in the system. Where staff are implicated in complaints then investigations are to exclude the relevant staff member from direct involvement to preserve impartiality.

9. If the investigating officer requires further information from the complainant, they are to initiate this within 3 working days of acknowledging the complaint. The complainant is to be offered the option to have an advocate present at any resulting meetings. The investigating officer ensures notes are taken of all meetings, phone conversations, etc. carried out as part of the complaints handling process.
10. The root cause must be determined and explained within all complaints. Any corrective actions arising from the establishment of the root cause must be processed through the incident management system and linked to the original complaint to maintain the audit trail.
11. The investigating officer is to resolve the complaint within 14 days of acknowledging the complaint and notify the complainant in writing of the outcome and any proposed resolution. The letter is to include information about appeals processes. The investigating officer maintains progress notes on the Incident Management System.

Appeals

13. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge an appeal. The appeal is referred to the CEO. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the CEO then the issue may be referred to the WCIG Board.
14. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome handed down by the Board they are to be referred to external agencies as outlined in section 6.

Complaints Records retention

15. All records related to complaints are to be retained in the system for, at minimum, the period specified under the relevant service agreement.
16. The Quality Manager monitors the complaint system for close out of all complaints and provides reports to the Quality Committee and the Leadership Team.

External Complaints Advocacy Services

Employment Services

Disability Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS): 1800 880 052

Email: crrs@workfocus.com

Website: www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints

Training Services

Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (Training services): 03 9637 2806

NDIS – Disability Services

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission: 1800 035 544

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1800 880 052

Youth Services / Better Futures

DHHS: 1300 884 706 or

Complaints Unit:

GPO Box 4057

Melbourne Victoria 3000.