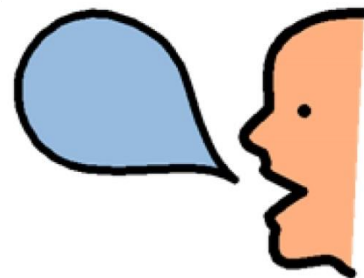



## What is Northcott's policy?



- ✓ Feedback, including complaints, suggestions and compliments, are welcomed and important to make sure the services we deliver are good and of the highest quality.
  - ✓ We recognise, respect and encourage the rights of people to raise complaints and give feedback without fear.
  - ✓ Feedback and complaints can be given in writing, by email, fax, by speaking to someone or any other method of communication.
  - ✓ We regularly ask for feedback about our services through surveys, service reviews, formal customer consultation meetings and encouraging informal feedback from customers.
  - ✓ How feedback or complaints are given will not affect how quickly we respond to you or the result of the response.
  - ✓ We train staff who work with children to consider their vulnerability and listen carefully to any complaints they make as they may not use adult "complaint" language.
  - ✓ Complaints about services received are handled in line with relevant legislation.
- 

Complaints should be handled in a timely and effective manner

- ✓ All complaints are recorded so the Quality and Practice team can find trends, identify risks and make recommendations for improvements at an individual, service or organisational level.
  - ✓ A standard approach to complaints management.
  - ✓ Feedback and complaints are managed in a fair and transparent way. We always try to reach a positive result.
- ✓ We encourage good listening and communication to make decisions based on proof of evidence, instead of speculation or suspicion.
  - ✓ Whenever possible complaints will be resolved within 35 days.
  - ✓ Personal information will not be shared with anyone without your written permission, unless we have concerns for your safety or we are required to by law. For example Mandatory Reporting of child wellbeing concerns.
  - ✓ People are updated about the progress of their complaint and involved in the resolution process.

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- ✓ We promote our feedback and complaints process.

This Policy does not cover an employee grievance. These should be lodged and managed by following our Grievance Policy and Procedure.

## Who needs to know about this Policy?

- All Northcott staff
- All Northcott customers

### Equity and Access Considerations

- All actions and decisions are made thinking about the age, culture, disability, language, religion, gender and sexuality of older people, people with a disability, their carers and advocates.
- Information is communicated and feedback is asked for in user friendly formats to suit the needs of customers, families, carers and target groups in the community.
- Our staff can speak to specialist resources when handling complaints from Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, or people from different cultural and language backgrounds. Interpreters can be found through the NSW Government Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS).
- Any person making a complaint to us has the right to ask an advocate to assist them. Our staff tell the person making the complaint that they have the right to involve an advocate and make all efforts to help them find an appropriate advocate if requested. A list of advocacy services is available in the *Help Us Improve Our Service* brochure.
- When a child or young person makes a complaint, our staff offer to find a support person to help them during the complaint process.
- Our staff ask for the person making the complaint's permission before referring them to an interpreter or advocate.
- The Complaints and Feedback Notification Form and *Help Us Improve Our Service* brochure are available to everyone on our website under "Feedback".

### Cultural Diversity

- Employees make sure services are provided with sensitivity to and awareness of the beliefs and practices of customers from different cultural and language backgrounds. This includes the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

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## Cultural Diversity

- Communication about this policy should be done in a way that suits each individual with respect to their cultural background. For example, use of an interpreter.

Who is responsible?	What are they responsible for?
<b>Chief Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage an environment where complaints are handled seriously and thoroughly.</li> <li>• Make sure an effective, fair and transparent complaint management system is developed and in place.</li> <li>• Make sure appropriate resources are available and used for effective complaint management.</li> <li>• Regular reporting on complaint trends to the Board of Directors.</li> <li>• Make sure appropriate actions are implemented to prevent similar problems from occurring.</li> <li>• The final review and approval of this policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1, 2 and 3 Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure to staff and customers</li> <li>• Show on-going improvement of the complaint management system.</li> <li>• Show a positive attitude towards solving complaints and encouraging customers and staff to feel confident about raising issues.</li> <li>• Support staff if a complaint has been raised against them by giving them the chance to respond so their version of events is heard.</li> <li>• Commit to providing staff training on complaints management outlined in the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall reporting and management of all complaints related to their service.</li> <li>• Ensuring local actions are carried out to prevent similar problems from occurring.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality and Practice Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify trends that may indicate a problem at a service or organisational level affecting delivery of service where improvement is needed.</li> <li>• Produce monthly and quarterly reports to the Executive to</li> </ul>

Who is responsible?	What are they responsible for?
	<p>inform them of the nature of complaints received, action taken, emerging trends and strategies to address systemic issues identified from complaints received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an annual view of complaints by type, identified issues and provide recommended actions.</li> <li>• Review customer satisfaction of the feedback/complaints process.</li> <li>• Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the complaint handling process. Maintain the Feedback and Complaints Policy, its related procedures and associated documents.</li> </ul>
<b>All Employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support our commitment to the timely and fair resolution of complaints.</li> <li>• Understand complaints, compliments and suggestions are welcomed and are a valued opportunity to improve service.</li> <li>• Understand their role in receiving, responding to or forwarding complaints.</li> <li>• Respect the privacy and dignity of the person making the complaint and making sure the information about a complaint will only be shared on a need to know basis, within the organisation and externally.</li> <li>• Review of the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure and providing input on ways the process could be improved.</li> </ul>

### Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

For Definitions, please refer to Northcott Policy Dictionary.

Legislation and Standards Compliance:

- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- Home and Community Care Act 1985
- Home and Community Care Amending Agreement 1999
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NSW Home Care Service Act 1988
- NSW Youth and Community Services Act 1973
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- NSW Community Services (Complaints, Review and Monitoring) Act 1993 – CS-CRAMA
- NSW Ombudsman Act 1974

## Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

- Privacy Act 1988
- NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- NSW Protected Disclosures Act 1994
- NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement 2002-07
- NSW Government Disability Policy Framework
- ACT Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994
- ACT Public Sector Management Act 1994
- ACT Public Service Customer Service Standard Best Practice Complaints Handling Standards
- ACT Children and Young People Act 2008
- ACT Disability Services Act 1998
- ACT Health Records (Privacy and Access Act) 1997
- ACT Ombudsman Act 1989
- ACT Human Rights Act 2004

## Related References

- DHCS (ACT) – Complaint Management and Feedback Guide
- NSW Ombudsman – Effective Complaint Management
- Good Practice Guide and Self Audit Tool – Disability Services Commissioner
- Child-safe Child-Friendly Workshop Workbook – NSW Commission for Children and Young People
- ADHC Standards in Action Manual 2012 – Standard 1: Rights
- ADHC Addendum to the Standards in Action Manual: - guide for services working with children and young people with a disability and their families (2015)
- NDIS Guide to Suitability (Provider Toolkit Module 4)
- NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers
- NDIS Rules and Guidelines
- Commonwealth Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme – Specialist Disability Services for Older People

## What other Northcott documents are related?

**You may need to refer to these documents for more information:**

[Feedback and Complaints Procedure](#)

[We Need Your Feedback \(Brochure and Poster\)](#)

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**Authorised by:** .....

**Kerry Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer**

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