

What is the Purpose?

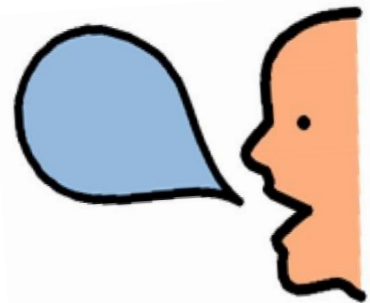
To outline the Northcott's position in regards to customers' right to provide feedback and to lodge a complaint.

Who needs to know about this Policy?

- All Northcott staff
- All Northcott customers

What is Northcott's Policy?

- ✓ Northcott's Feedback and Complaints Policy is developed in accordance with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018* and reflects the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission "Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines".
- ✓ Complaints and other feedback are welcomed through a transparent and easily accessible process.
- ✓ Appropriate support and assistance is available to support people accessing the system.
- ✓ People affected by the complaint are involved and kept informed at all stages of the process. This includes progress, resolution, any actions taken, reasons for decisions made and options for decisions to be reviewed.
- ✓ 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. People are treated with respect and dignity throughout the feedback and complaints' process.
- ✓ 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 so they are aware of the complaints process. They receive instructions on the use of and how to comply with the system.



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- ✓ We train staff who work with children to consider their vulnerability and to 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. This could include referring to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- ✓ We offer appropriate support and assistance to any person wishing to make a complaint to our service or to the Commissioner.



- ✓ All complaints are recorded so the Quality and Safeguards 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.
- ✓ Decision makers are required to be fair, unbiased and impartial to abide by the guidelines of procedural fairness.
- ✓ Complaints will be handled in a timely and effective manner and all records will be kept for a minimum of seven years.
- ✓ Northcott will not share customer personal information without their written permission unless we are required to by the law. For example, Mandatory Reporting of child wellbeing concerns.
- ✓ People are updated about the progress of their complaint and involved in the resolution process.
- ✓ We promote our feedback and complaints process and use it to identify problems with service delivery and how they can be fixed.

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

Equity and Access Considerations

- All actions and decisions are made thinking about the age, culture, disability, language, religion, gender and sexuality of complainants.
- 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 will inform the complainant 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

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Equity and Access Considerations

services is available in the *Feedback and Complaints* brochure.

- When a child or young person makes a complaint, Northcott staff will offer to find a support person to help them during the complaint process. It may not be appropriate for the complainant or child to be directly involved in the resolution of a complaint.
- Northcott staff will seek the complainant's permission before referring them to an interpreter or advocate.
- The Complaints and Feedback Notification Form and *Feedback and Complaints* brochure are available to everyone on our website under "Feedback".

Cultural Diversity

- Employees must make sure services are provided with sensitivity which considers 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.
- 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.

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 \(Brochure and Poster\)](#)

Who is Responsible?	What are they Responsible for?
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final review and approval of this policy.
Level 2 Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain this policy, its related procedures and documents.
Level 3 and 4 Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the policy is effectively implemented in their services. • Ensure staff follow the policy.
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff have read and understand the policy and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.
All Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the requirements of the policy.

Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

Definitions:

Complaint - feedback you give us if you are unhappy with our service and you would like us to try to find a solution to the problem

Suggestion or Compliment – an opportunity for you to share a comment, opinion or idea about how we can improve something.

Procedural Fairness - acting fairly when making administrative decisions. For example, before adverse action is taken the person affected will be put on notice , have an opportunity to express their views, oppose any hurtful information and have any final decisions explained.

For Definitions, please refer to Northcott Policy Dictionary.

Legislation:

Legislation and Standards Compliance:

- This policy was developed in accordance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (the Act)
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- Home and Community Care Act 1985
- Home and Community Care Amending Agreement 1999
- 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
- 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

Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

- 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
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- 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)



Authorised by:

Kerry Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer