



GCYS COMPLAINTS HANDLING

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Policy:

Gold Coast Youth Service welcomes and encourages information and feedback from staff, service users, visitors, stakeholders and the broader community. This enables the organisation to review current practices and where identified, improve the quality of the services we provide. All persons are made aware of their right to make a complaint about service provision, organisational decisions, employee behaviour or anything else they see fit to bring to our attention. They are informed of the process they need to follow to lodge a complaint and their right to nominate a support person or advocate to assist them with this process. All persons have a right to make a complaint without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly. The CEO will take steps to ensure that all persons feel comfortable to continue their association with Gold Coast Youth Service after making a complaint or giving negative feedback.

Definition: **Complaint:** A complaint is where a person or group expresses dissatisfaction with a service, situation, process or decision. This can include the behaviour or actions of individuals, or the organisation itself.

Purpose:

The purpose of the procedure is to:

- Ensure all persons wanting to make a complaint have the opportunity to do so
- Ensure consistency within the organisation in the handling and resolving of complaints.
- Provide employees with a framework for the resolution of complaints in a timely, efficient and standardised manner
- Ensure procedural fairness in the management of complaints
- Allow GCYS to track the number and types of complaints received for consideration in ongoing quality improvement practices.

Scope:

- All persons working within the organisation, both paid and unpaid, service users, visitors and stakeholders.
- Persons employed by the organisation who wish to lodge a grievance in regard to a staff member or the organisation, will follow procedures as set out in the GCYS Disputes & Grievances Policy and Procedure

Authorisation

The Management Committee
Gold Coast Youth Service Inc

Procedure:

There are many factors that influence a person's decision to make a complaint.

There is also a range in the types of issues that people may want to bring to the attention of the organisation and can include:

- Service delivery
- An experience they have had while attending our service or activity
- Governance
- Issues that may potentially be of a criminal nature

NOTE: If a complaint or feedback received has criminal implications, such as fraud, or abuse, then the CEO should be notified immediately. It is the CEO's responsibility to notify police, the Chairperson and funding bodies where a contractual agreement to do so exists.

GCYS's Complaints management process is composed of four phases:

- Advertising (how to make a complaint)
- Intake & Review (lodging a complaint)
- Actions and Outcomes (resolving a complaint)
- Monitoring Effectiveness and Reporting (reviewing actions and effectiveness)

Advertising:

- Service users must be informed about GCYS's policy and procedure for lodging complaints as soon as practicable. This includes their right to use a support person and or advocate of their choice
- Information is displayed on the GCYS website for the broader community
- Signage is displayed at the Centre for service-users and visitors
- Displayed information includes making complaints external to the organisation such as directly to funding bodies via their websites.
- Information includes advocacy services
- GCYS Complaint forms are located in the two reception areas along with envelopes to ensure confidentiality

Intake & Review

- Complaints can be lodged in person, by mail or email.
- Persons can remain anonymous if they wish, or use an advocate of their choice to act on their behalf e.g. friend, family member or an advocacy service.
- If the complainant has specific needs e.g. cultural considerations, hearing or speech impairment, reading or writing difficulties, or requires assistance such as an interpreter, translator or advocacy service in order to lodge their feedback or complaint, every possible attempt will be made to arrange the required services/supports.

NOTE: Where the complaint relates to a line manager, do not proceed in taking the complaint. Explain to the complainant that you will take their name and contact details and that the CEO will make contact with them to discuss any complaint they may have – provide details to the CEO

Actions & Outcomes

Informal Verbal Complaints

- Many complaints can be resolved informally and efficiently via personal contact.
- In the first instance and where appropriate the complainant will be encouraged to raise their complaint with the staff member concerned
- If the complainant would prefer to speak with someone else, or the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant is to be directed to the staff member's line manager
- If the complaint is about an organisational decision, policy or procedure, the complainant will be directed to the CEO
- Where a complaint is lodged verbally and directly to an employee in the course of providing services

- The employee should listen carefully and respond to the client in a polite and respectful manner
- Write down the complaint using the GCYS Complaint Form, ensure you write the complainant's words exactly and not the worker's own interpretation of them.
- Clarify their understanding of the complaint and ask the complainant how they would like the complaint resolved.
- Wherever possible, try to resolve the complaint at this time.
- If the circumstances do not allow the complaint to be resolved immediately, and the complaint relates to a staff member or services provided, direct the complaint to the relevant line manager
- Where there is a verbal complaint of this nature, employees should still forward the completed GCYS Complaint Form to the CEO, even if it has been resolved.
- Include a written note of the complaint into client case notes/records
- Each complaint form should have a corresponding GCYS Actions Taken attached for filing
- Complainants will be asked for feedback on the complaints procedure unless;
 - The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome and has been directed to the line manager or CEO. In these cases the process for responding to formal written complaints will be followed.

NOTE: All complaints of a serious nature, e.g. corruption, fraud, harassment, etc. should be referred directly to the CEO immediately.

Confidentiality and Recording

- The details of a complaint should be kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution.
- The complainant's permission should be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties which it may be desirable to involve, in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.
- Person/s affected by the complaint will be fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to put forward their case.
- Anonymous complaints can at times be difficult to manage and respond to however; the content will be assessed to determine if any action is appropriate and or considerations for quality improvements.
- Every complaint lodged, whether it is an informal verbal complaint, a formal written complaint or an anonymous complaint must be **entered on the GCYS Complaints Register**.

Formal Written Complaints

Formal complaints must:

- Be made in writing and lodged with the CEO via mail, email, or in person
- If the complainant has specific needs e.g. cultural considerations, hearing or speech impairment, reading or writing difficulties or requires assistance such as an interpreter, translator or advocacy service in order to lodge their feedback or complaint, every possible attempt will be made to arrange the required services/supports.
- Provide specific details about the nature of the complaint
- Provide contact details of the complainant being, address, phone number and where available their email address
- All complaints will be dealt with confidentially and in a timely manner.
- Mailed complaints must be marked clearly on the envelope with the word 'CONFIDENTIAL'.
- Emailed complaints should be addressed to maria.leebeek@gcys.com.au and include the words 'CONFIDENTIAL COMPLAINT' in the subject box.
- By Mail

CONFIDENTIAL
 The CEO
 Gold Coast Youth Service Inc
 PO Box 740
 Burleigh Heads Qld 4220

NOTE: If the complaint involves the CEO, the matter can be referred directly to the Chairperson of the Management Committee; envelope addressed to:

The Chairperson GCYS (same address) and marked confidential.

Responding to Formal Complaints

- All formal complaints will be acknowledged by the CEO, or their designated person, via mail, telephone or email within 7 days of receipt.
- The CEO will consult with relevant parties and a written response will be provided to the complainant within 28 days from the date of receipt of the complaint.
- Complainants will be asked for feedback on the complaints procedure unless;
 - the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then the CEO will offer to arrange a meeting with the Chairperson of the Management Committee
 - The Chairperson will consult with the CEO and other relevant parties and provide a written response to the complainant within 14 days of consultation.
- Complainants will be asked for feedback on the complaints procedure unless;
 - ⊖ the complaint cannot be resolved internally, the complainant will be informed that additional support will be sought from the QLD Government's Dispute Resolution Branch.
 - The CEO is responsible for supporting the complainant to access external support services in resolving complaints

Dispute Resolution Branch

Ph: 13 74 68

Online; https://www.qld.gov.au/contact-us#contact_us_form

- If the complaint still cannot be resolved, the client will be informed that they have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsmen

Queensland Ombudsmen

Level 18, 53 Albert St

Brisbane QLD 4001

GPO Box 3314

Brisbane QLD 4001

Tel: 07 3005 7000

Toll Free (outside Brisbane): 1800 068 908

Fax: 07 3005 7067

TTY: 3006 8174

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Website: <http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/cms/>

Supporting continued access to services

Professionalism of Gold Coast Youth Service employees underpins the Organisation's ability to ensure that all persons feel comfortable to continue their association with Gold Coast Youth Service, even after making a complaint or giving negative feedback.

Where a service user, family member, stakeholder or other person may make the decision that they would prefer to work with another employee and not the employee about which the complaint was made, where possible and appropriate, the CEO will allocate an alternative staff member to the person's satisfaction.

Monitoring Effectiveness and Reporting

Monitoring the effectiveness of procedures and reporting enables GCYS to identify any trends or system issues that may inform improvements to services delivered. Monitoring will be performed by the CEO and Management Committee.

Monthly reviews

- Review the **Complaint Register**, including outcomes and complainant satisfaction.
- Reviews will support Management in decision making in regard to ongoing improvements in service provision, policies and procedures
- Findings will be documented in Management Meeting minutes along with any action taken from the review
- Reviews will contribute to annual reviews and forward planning
- It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that information about complaints have been submitted to the Management Committee and the funding body; where a contractual agreement to do so exists.

Please refer to the flowchart **GCYS Complaints Handling Flowchart** for direction on how complaints will be processed.

Funding Bodies and other services:

Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disabilities Services & Seniors
Compliments & Complaints: 1800 491 467
or <https://www.complaints.services.qld.gov.au/>

Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women
Complaints 1800 080 464
or <https://www.complaints.services.qld.gov.au/>

Queensland Government Department of Housing and Public Works
Compliments & Complaints: 07 5645 8100
or <https://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/contact/complaints-compliments>

Australian Government Department of Social Services Compliments & Complaints:
1800 634 035
or <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries>

The Queensland Human Rights Commission – deals with discrimination, sexual harassment and acts of public hatred. Discrimination can be illegal if it happens because of your:

 race	 disability
 age or sex	 religious beliefs
 pregnancy	 family responsibilities
 breastfeeding	 parental status
 relationship status	 gender identity
 sexuality	 political beliefs
 lawful sexual activity	 trade union activity

Phone: 1300 130 670
Fax: 07 3193 9979

TTY: 133 677 then ask for 1300 130 670
Post: City East Post Shop PO Box 15565 City East QLD
4002

Web: <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/>

Related Documents

[Complaints Flowchart](#)
[GCYS Handbook](#)
[GCYS Complaints Form](#)