Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures

Responsible officer/s:	*Governance, Risk & Compliance Officer*	***Policy No. & Version:***	*Policy #7 v7*
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Review timeframe:	*Every 2 years from date of adoption*	***Date of next review:***	*15/10/2028*

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to ensure that Gold Coast Youth Service (GCYS) handles complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. This policy provides guidance to GCYS staff and people who wish to make a complaint, on the key principles and concepts of the complaint management system.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a complaint handling process which is accessible to any person wanting to lodge a complaint
- ensure all complaints and complainants are treated respectfully and appropriately
- maintain a consistent process for handling and resolving complaints, including procedural fairness
- provide employees with a framework for the management of complaints, to allow a clear, timely and effective process
- allow GCYS to manage and analyse complaints for the purposes of ongoing quality improvement and adherence to relevant legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all persons working within the organisation (both paid and unpaid), service users, clients, visitors, stakeholders, contractors and the community.

Persons employed by the organisation who wish to lodge a grievance regarding a staff member or the organisation, will be required to follow the procedures set out in the GCYS Disputes & Grievances Policy.

Authorisation
Management Committee
Gold Coast Youth Service, Inc.

Complaint Handling Process

The GCYS Complaint Handling Process is composed of four phases:

1. Communication
2. Assess & Investigate
3. Determine Outcome & Provide Reasons for Decision
4. Monitoring Effectiveness & Reporting

Note: ***If a complaint received by the organisation, has criminal implications such as fraud or abuse, the CEO should be notified immediately.***

1. Communication

- Service users should be informed about GCYS's Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures as soon as practicable. This includes the right to use a support person and/or advocate of their choice during the process.
- Service users will be encouraged to raise their complaints with the staff member concerned.
- If service users prefer to speak with someone else, or the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant will be directed to the staff member's Team Leader.
- Information about the complaints process is displayed on the GCYS Website for the broader community.
- Signage is displayed at the GCYS Centre for service-users and visitors.
- Complaint Forms are located on-line via the website at Complaints – GCYS.

2. Assess & Investigate

- A complaint can be lodged in person, by mail or by email to qualityassurance@gcys.org.au.
- All formal complaints will be acknowledged within seven (7) days of receipt.
- After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, GCYS will confirm within 28 days, whether the issue/s raised in the complaint are within the organisations' control.
- The organisation will also consider the outcome/s sought by the complainant and, if there is more than one issue raised, will determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
- When determining how a complaint will be managed, the following will be taken into consideration:
    - How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is.
    - Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety.
    - How the person making the complaint is being affected.
    - The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed.
    - Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.
- If the complainant has specific needs e.g. cultural considerations, hearing or speech impairment, reading or writing difficulties, or they require assistance such as an interpreter, translator or advocacy service, every possible attempt will be made to arrange the required services/supports needed.

Objectivity and fairness

- Each complaint will be addressed with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- GCYS will ensure that the person handling a complaint, is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.
- Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.
- Internal Reviews of how a complaint was managed, will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

3. Determine Outcome & Provide Reasons for Decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, GCYS will contact the complainant and advise:

1. The outcome of the complaint and any action taken.
2. The reason/s for the decision.
3. The remedy or resolution/s that has been proposed or put in place.
4. Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

4. Monitoring Effectiveness & Reporting

4.1 GCYS will maintain records about:

- how the complaint was managed
- the outcome/s of the complaint including:
    - whether it, or any aspect of it was substantiated
    - any recommendations made to address problems identified
    - any decisions made on those recommendations
- any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

4.2 Analyse data

Every complaint lodged must be provided to the GCYS Governance, Risk and Compliance Officer, or CEO, who will enter it on the GCYS Complaints Register and ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the GCYS Management Committee.

Related Documents

GCYS Handbook
GCYS Complaint Form
GCYS Complaints Register
GCYS Disputes & Grievances Policy
GCYS Privacy Policy

Definitions

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.