

Feedback and Complaints

At a glance

- Who** This procedure applies to the Sylvanvale Board, Executive team, Managers and Workers (including Support Workers, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and students).
- What** Sylvanvale is committed to a positive complaints culture and actively seeks feedback from Clients, their families, stakeholders and members of the community. Feedback is encouraged to assist with improving service delivery, systems, and processes.
- Feedback and complaints are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and well-managed.
- Why** Sylvanvale has an in-house complaints management and resolution system and workers support people who wish to make a complaint. This is a condition of being a Registered NDIS Provider and for providers of Early Childhood Education and Care Services.

! Sylvanvale Support Coordinators and Clinical Services team members in particular may encounter situations when Clients complain about other Sylvanvale supports and services. In these instances, the Support Coordinator or Clinical Services worker may collect relevant information about the complaint but cannot directly enter feedback or complaints about other Sylvanvale services into the RiskMan system on behalf of a Client. Instead these complaints are directed to the relevant service manager for entry.

The person making the complaint will be appropriately involved and kept informed of progress in the resolution of their complaint.

A worker grievance is NOT a complaint. Refer to the Grievance Resolution Procedure for more information. Worker grievances will be deleted from the feedback management system and forwarded to hrtteam1@sylvanvale.com.au for action.

! Where another document is referred to within this procedure, it can be located on the Sylvanvale Intranet. The [Intranet Document Library](#) contains all of Sylvanvale's Policy, Procedure, Form, Template, Protocol and Poster documents.

This document does not contain direct hyperlinks to any other document.

Policy

1.1 Identifying and recording

Feedback Management System (RiskMan)

Sylvanvale has a feedback management system (RiskMan) where all feedback is recorded to ensure it is investigated promptly, fairly, thoroughly and in a timely manner.

All feedback (complaints, compliments and suggestions) must be recorded in RiskMan within 24 hours of receipt. The worker who receives the feedback is responsible for recording the feedback in RiskMan. Where Support Coordinators or Clinical Services team members receive feedback for another Sylvanvale service this should be sent directly to the relevant service manager so they are able to enter the feedback within 24 hours.

Complaints must be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt and should be resolved within 28 calendar days.

Options are also available for review or escalation, e.g. internal review, external review or appeal.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is expected.

A person does not necessarily have to expressly state that they wish to make a complaint to have an issue or concern dealt with as a complaint. Regardless of whether it is a big or small issue, it should be treated seriously to demonstrate to the person that their input is valued for improving the services being delivered.

Training

i *Learning and Development Procedure*

i *Operations Team Meeting Agenda and Minutes*

All feedback is valued and should be used as an effective tool to improve service quality and business processes.

All workers are required to convey to the person providing feedback that their input is valued and will be used to improve the services being delivered.

Induction training includes various components and modules which inform all workers about the feedback process, this policy and related procedures and where feedback must be recorded.

Feedback is a standing agenda item in Operations Team meetings.

1.2 Supporting people with disability

Support

i *Feedback Booklet - Complaints Compliments and Suggestions*

All Clients and any substitute decision makers are supported and encouraged to provide feedback by being:

- provided with written information about the complaint handling process (at each pre-planning and plan implementation meeting)
- provided with multiple and accessible ways to provide feedback
- listened to, treated with respect by workers and kept involved in the resolution process

- kept informed of the progress including action taken, reasons for any decisions made and options for further review
- reassured that the details of their complaint will be managed within the relevant privacy and confidentiality principles.

Complainants are not threatened or subject to detrimental action or retribution

Accessibility

i [How to Give Feedback to Sylvanvale - Easy Read Version](#)

i [Feedback and Complaints Form - Easy Read Version](#)

i [How To Make A Complaint Poster - Easy Read Version](#)

i [Client Meeting Record](#)

i [Communication Support Procedure](#)

i [NDS CALD Resources](#)

Information about how to provide feedback (including making complaints) is available in an accessible, easy to understand format.

Easy read guides, posters and forms are all available and Clients are regularly supported to understand methods for providing feedback and complaints. Interpreter/translator services will be made available when Sylvanvale deems that these services are needed to enable effective communication. Refer to the *Communication Support Procedure* for further information.

Each Site Manager is responsible for reinforcing each Client's right to provide feedback and/or make a complaint and creating a supportive environment to do so.

The *How To Make A Complaint Poster - Easy Read Version* is displayed at each site and identifies who the Client can speak to if they would like to make a complaint.

Feedback and complaints can be lodged using a variety of forms and methods such as in person, over the phone, by email, by website, by letter or by completing a form.

The *How to Give Feedback to Sylvanvale – Easy Read Version* is used to educate Clients and promote discussion in Client meetings which are held on a regular basis.

NDS provides a number of additional CALD resources to promote seeking feedback from Clients and their stakeholders. A major barrier to CALD Australians interacting with feedback and complaints systems is a lack of trust and fear of negative repercussions. To be confident to give feedback or make a complaint, a person must know that they can complain and be aware of the available complaints processes. These [resources](#) should be used to help inform Clients and their stakeholders about feedback and complaints systems.

With consent, anyone may represent a person wishing to give feedback or make a complaint (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation) and Sylvanvale will communicate with their representative where consent has been provided to do so.

Anonymous complaints

Sylvanvale accepts anonymous complaints and will examine the issues raised where there is enough information provided to do so.

Privacy and confidentiality

i [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#)

The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* sets out the organisation's approach to privacy and confidentiality.

The Privacy Officer is the point of contact for any concerns regarding Sylvanvale privacy practices or handling of personal or sensitive information.

1.3 Feedback management system

Complaints management

All complaints received are recorded in RiskMan and assigned to the appropriate team within Sylvanvale to ensure the correct and best resolution for the complainant is achieved.

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with Sylvanvale. Complaints (whilst still recorded in RiskMan) should be dealt with directly and quickly at the point of service, unless the complaint requires further investigation.

If the complaint is deemed sensitive or involves the Manager/Site Manager or an external body such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, it must be recorded in RiskMan by selecting the Division as *Corporate Services* and Location as *Service Quality and Practice*. The Senior Manager Practice and Compliance will immediately review the details and determine the appropriate next steps.

If the complaint is from the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission, it must be recorded in RiskMan by selecting the Division as *Corporate Services* and Location as *Investigations*. The Investigations team will be responsible for reviewing and managing any complaint actions or outcomes.

Complaints oversight

The Senior Manager Practice and Compliance is the designated Complaints Manager for the organisation and will receive alerts for all feedback recorded in RiskMan and will provide oversight to ensure all complaints are responded to appropriately and in a fair, efficient and timely manner.

The Quality and Practice Team are responsible for triaging all complaints, ensuring issues are appropriately recorded, actions allocated and acknowledgement, and response and resolution timeframes met.

Complaints about workers

Procedural fairness must be provided to any worker who is the specific subject of a complaint.

i *Incident Management Policy*

Not every complaint will make adverse allegations, directly or implicitly, against an identifiable worker. Many complaints may instead be about the quality or level of supports or services provided or available to the Client. In those circumstances there is no obligation to afford procedural fairness to individual workers, unless a possible outcome of the investigation is that a worker will be identified as being at fault.

i *Incident Management Procedure*

Where a complaint makes allegations, directly or implicitly, against an identifiable worker then the Senior Manager Practice and Compliance will make a recommendation to both the Executive Quality and Practice and Executive People and Culture to determine whether a workplace investigation or reportable incident investigation is required.

Any investigation process will run concurrently with the complaint management process and are independent of each other. Refer to

the *Incident Management Policy* and *Incident Management Procedure* for information about investigations.

Referring complaints

i *Incident Management Policy*

The *Incident Management Policy* sets out reporting obligations to regulatory bodies which include where issues or incidents are identified as a result of a complaint.

1.4 Standards, laws and other contractual obligations

Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Practice Standards and Quality Indicators NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers
Legislation or other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 (NSW)</i> <i>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013</i> <i>The National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018</i> <i>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>
Contractual obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits

1.5 Review, approval and document controls

Policy name	Feedback and Complaints Policy
Review Frequency	Every 1 year
Person responsible	Deirdre Young, Executive Manager Quality and Practice
Approval	Leanne Fretten, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next review due
1	21/02/2019	Leanne Fretten, CEO	21/02/2022
2	20/04/2020	Leanne Fretten, CEO	19/04/2023
3	27/09/2023	Leanne Fretten, CEO	26/09/2026