

Complaints Management Policy

Purpose

This policy provides clear guidance for Peopleworks staff and stakeholders on how to raise complaints, offer feedback, or share observations. It ensures that all input is managed fairly, respectfully, and effectively. This Complaints Management Policy also complements Peopleworks' regular stakeholder surveys by offering an additional channel for continuous improvement.

Scope

This policy describes the approach taken to fairly, effectively and efficiently manage complaints, compliments and feedback in relation to:

- A complaint or compliment about Peopleworks. This includes:
 - Any handling of a matter, our policies, procedures or services;
 - Any allegation of impropriety or misconduct by a staff member or contractor in the provision of services (including NDIS Support Coordination).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint:	Any expression of dissatisfaction for which a response is expected or warranted. In this document, where the word "Complaint" is used, it includes "complaints and grievances".
Compliment:	Any expression of positive feedback about the provision of services or supports. Such expressions are always welcome and will be acknowledged, with gratitude shown to the person or people providing the feedback.
Feedback:	Public or other stakeholder comments on what can be done to improve Peopleworks supports and services.
Parties:	Complaints and compliments usually involve the complainant and the subject of the complaint. This may include: • A participant or participants, where they are not the complainant • A participant's family member(s), advocate or support person • A Support coordinator or other staff member
Whistleblower:	A whistleblower is a person—such as an employee, contractor, or stakeholder—who reports suspected misconduct, unethical behaviour, or illegal activity within the organisation. Whistleblowers are protected under relevant laws and organisational policies to ensure they can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

What to expect from Peopleworks:

The focus of the process is to provide a high quality response to resolve feedback and complaints quickly, and with a minimum of distress. As such, feedback and complaints should be handled according to the following principles:

- Peopleworks will take your feedback or complaint seriously. We will listen to what you tell us and consider it carefully.
- Peopleworks will communicate clearly and treat you with respect and courtesy using the communication method you wish us to:
- All complaints should be acknowledged. Formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing. Informal complaints may be acknowledged verbally.
- Peopleworks' complaints management process adheres to the principles of procedural fairness.
- NDIS participants will be provided with information to contact independent advocates.

- The resolution of complaints should be as prompt as possible, unless it is not practical, lawful or ethical to do so. We will communicate clearly how long it may take us to deal with your complaint and aim to resolve simpler complaints within 7 days. More complex complaints may take longer.
- Peopleworks will provide the complainant (or representative):
 - the name and contact details of the person handling your complaint
 - reasonable opportunity to provide us with information
 - clear reasons for decisions

What Peopleworks expect of all parties to a complaint:

- It is expected that all parties should engage with the resolution processes in good faith, with a desire to work co-operatively to problem-solve.
- It is expected that all parties will treat one another with respect. Individuals must not harass or victimise other parties involved in the matter. The parties understand that we may restrict how we communicate with people whose conduct we consider unreasonable.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be strictly observed by all parties at all stages of the Complaints Management Process.
- Complainants and respondents will be informed of the outcomes of these processes wherever appropriate.
- Make Peopleworks aware of any special needs or extra help required in understanding or accessing our complaints service.

How to make a complaint:

The contact officer for all complaints is:

The principal, Peter Wheatley.

Telephone: 0418 519 698

Email: pwheatley@peopleworks.biz

You can make a complaint to us anonymously, although we can usually help more if you can tell us who you are. You can also ask us to make your complaint confidential. This means that we will not share any information about you. If you prefer, someone else can contact us on your behalf, however we may need your consent for them to act on your behalf.

Any person who makes a complaint and each person with a disability affected by an issue raised in such a complaint, will be provided with information on how that complaint or issue may be raised with the NDIS Commissioner. Support and assistance will be provided in contacting the NDIS Commissioner.

What will happen if you make a complaint or report?

Any complaints or reports of unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment or bullying will be treated quickly, seriously and with sensitivity. The complaint will be investigated immediately, thoroughly, impartially and confidentially.

Any individual who raises or supports someone who raises a concern will not suffer a negative consequence as a result of raising that concern.

Complaint Process

- Decide, in consultation with the complainant, whether the matter can be resolved informally or should be referred to the formal resolution process
- This may in some cases indicate an immediate referral to the NDIS Complaints Commission or Tasmanian Police.
- Respect the sensitive nature of the case and ensure confidentiality. Make sure that no information regarding the complaint is discussed outside of this procedure.
- Assure the complainant that all details of the complaint will be received in confidence and allow the individual to be consulted in regard to the procedure.
- Emphasise the protection of the complainant at all times. No face-to-face meeting will take place without consent of both parties.
- Assure the complainant that his or her employment, volunteer or supplier status will not be disadvantaged in any way.
- Notify the alleged respondent of the nature of that complaint as soon as possible after the formal complaint is made.
- Inform all parties they have the right to have representation / support, if they choose, in any investigatory procedure.
- Give the alleged respondent an opportunity to be heard prior to considering whether disciplinary action should be taken.
- Take relevant disciplinary action against anyone who has breached this policy in accordance with Peopleworks Pty Ltd's related policies.

NOTE: During these steps, the complainant and the respondent may request that another person accompany them. (This may be a union representative, a colleague, a family member, or a friend).

Investigation

Where necessary, the complaint will be investigated by a person approved by the Principals. This may be an external party.

Procedures: Informal

In many instances attempts can be made to resolve complaints informally. The purpose of the informal procedure is to resolve the issues, not to establish "innocence" or "guilt".

The expected outcome is that both parties are satisfied that a resolution has been reached and the complainant is satisfied that no further incidents will occur.

Complainant Action

Complainants may choose to deal with the respondent themselves. If doing so, they are encouraged to first seek advice from the nominated Workplace Support Contact Officer. They may:

- Directly approach the respondent and explain how their behaviour is affecting them and ask them to stop
- Approach the respondent, accompanied by the Principals or other support person, and proceed as above
- Write a confidential letter to the respondent which sets out the effect of their actions and which asks them to address their actions.
- Direct the Contact Officer to work with them to resolve the issue by way of appropriate informal procedure.

Procedures: Formal

Formal procedures should be used when informal conciliation has been unsuccessful (or is not considered appropriate).

A formal complaint may only proceed if the complainant is prepared to have his or her identity made known to the respondent.

A formal complaint must be lodged by the complainant in writing to the Principal.

Responsibilities

Members, employees, volunteers, suppliers, and corporate partners shall:

- Support, understand and comply with this Policy at all times
- Ensure the work environment is free from harassment and discrimination
- Not tolerate any form of discrimination and notify a Contact Officer if it arises
- Offer support to anyone who is being harassed and let them know where they can seek assistance
- Maintain complete confidentiality if you are provided with information during the investigation of a complaint
- Do not spread gossip or rumours as they may expose an individual to a defamation action
- Do not make judgements or victimise any person associated with a complaint.

Contact Officers: Principals

- The Principals are responsible for the execution of the responsibilities assigned in this policy including:
 - Being familiar with this Policy
 - Briefing all relevant parties on the terms of this Policy and making clear that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated
 - Treating all complaints seriously and taking immediate and appropriate action in the event of a complaint under the terms of this Policy
 - Applying and promoting the Policy and procedure fairly, consistently and without bias
 - Modelling non-discriminatory behaviour in the workplace at all times
 - Monitoring the working environment to ensure it is free of offensive material and that acceptable standards of conduct are observed at all times
 - Providing confidential assistance to individuals, including investigating issues raised
 - Trying to resolve any matter raised or referring a complaint to external parties if there is a conflict of interest or if the complaint is particularly complex or serious
 - Maintaining confidential, accurate, factual written records of matters
 - Educating employees, members, volunteers, suppliers, corporate partners about the Respectful Behaviour Policy and participating in training programs
 - Communicating the Policy to all existing employees, volunteers and members and providing them with access to it
 - Recruiting, promoting, developing, training and transferring employees on the basis of merit and performance
 - Informing all new employees, members and volunteers during their induction, of the Respectful Behaviour Policy, the standards expected, and the procedure for making a complaint
 - Providing advice on and circulating this Policy
 - Maintaining the Policy to reflect changes to the law in this area

Version Control:

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