

PODC: Managing Feedback and Complaints

4.1	MANAGING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS
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Applies to: Staff and Management committee
Specific responsibility: Coordinator and President

Version: 2
Date approved: May 2015
Next review date: July 2016

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	Standard 4: Feedback and Complaints Standard 1: Rights Standard 2: Participation and Inclusion
Legislation or other requirements	Disability Services Act 1993 No.3 Principles Community Services (complaints, reviews & monitoring) Act 1993 No.2

POLICY STATEMENT

PODC is committed to :

- recognising a person's right to make complaints, comments or suggestions about the level and quality of services provided;
- encouraging the submission of any complaints people may have with PODC services provided;
- encouraging client involvement in the processes of developing and reviewing PODC complaint management policies.
- providing an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for resolving complaints;
- ensuring that all complaints are heard and equitably resolved as soon as possible;
- monitoring complaints in an endeavour to improve the quality of services;
- providing people with information about the complaint handling process; and
- promoting a positive attitude towards people and the commitment to resolving complaints.
- maintain confidentiality of parties involved, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution

RIGHTS OF COMPLAINANTS

Fairness - Complainants have rights to:

- be heard;
- know whether PODC relevant service procedures have been followed;
- be informed of the criteria and processes;
- be informed of the response of the person complained of;
- be informed of PODC decision and the reasons for that decision;
- know that a genuine, thorough and unbiased examination of the complaint has been undertaken,
- confidentiality, if requested.
- Be supported through the complaints process by a person of their choosing

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- Submit a complaint without fear of retribution
- Responsiveness - Complainants shall be:
- advised how long it will take to deal with the complaint; and
- be kept informed of progress by telephone advice, correspondence or interview.

RIGHT TO COMPLAIN TO NSW OMBUDSMAN

Service users have a right to escalate a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman if they believe PODC has acted unreasonably:

- in the way they provide or manage a service to someone
- not providing a service to someone
- withdrawing or changing a service to someone
- providing a service to someone that you believe should not be getting it.

Service users can make a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman about the handling of an allegation of a child protection nature against a PODC employee (a '[reportable allegation](#)').

PODC has a responsibility to inform service users of this right. Details on the policy and procedure is on PODC feedback and complaints tab on the website.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PODC EMPLOYEES.

Dealing Directly with the Complainant - Oral or Written

A PODC employee has a responsibility to:

- obtain sufficient detail about the complaint to enable a proper assessment, review and response to the complaint;
- advise the complainant of the time required to provide information to resolve the complaint;
- agree with the complainant about the form the response will take (oral or written); record all complaints in writing and to assist the complainant to review this documentation for accuracy
- record complaint details, timing and the form of response where required for reporting purposes (to Advocate/Coordinator or Management Committee delegate).
- Ensure service users feel supported and safe if making a complaint involving abuse or neglect.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS AGAINST A PODC EMPLOYEE

A PODC employee against whom a complaint has been made has rights to:

- assemble sufficient detail about the complaint to enable the employee to properly respond to the complaint;
- place all relevant material before the person appointed to review the complaint;
- provide written submissions regarding the complaint; and
- be informed of the decision and the reason for the decision.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

The Management Committee shall:

- provide training for staff members on management of complaints and how to best manage and support service users who make a complaints. *See induction process in Governance manual.*
- empower people within PODC with the authority necessary to resolve complaints quickly and effectively;
- provide sufficient resources within their area of control to ensure the efficient and effective management of external party complaints;
- ensure a no blame culture exists;
- ensure all complaints are dealt with in an acceptable and timely manner;
- monitor progress of their complaints handling process;
- maintain an appropriate recording mechanism for oral and written complaints (in accordance with this policy and procedures);

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- identify repetitive complaints;
- evaluate the data and determine the causes of complaints and whether remedial action is required;
- develop and implement continuous improvements to practices that are the cause of complaints within their area of responsibility; and report in PODC's Annual Report any significant complaint issues, particularly systemic complaints and those resulting in service improvements.

PROCEDURES FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS.

Oral Procedures for Lodging Complaints

Oral complaints (in-person or by telephone) may be made by any external party (complainant) (or a person representing the complainant) direct to a PODC Coordinator or Management committee member at the PODC office or by telephone/email/facsimile.

Assistance will be provided to any person who is deaf or hearing impaired or has other special needs to ensure the complaint can be made or lodged in an appropriate form in accordance with these Procedures. (EG: an Auslan interpreter or TTY service can be made available where necessary)

Complaints Resolved at First Point of Contact

Wherever possible the complaint should be resolved at the initial point of contact by the Coordinator receiving the complaint. This is to be recorded as a Stage One Complaint

Complaints Referred

- Where the complaint is unable to be resolved by the Coordinator, it will be referred immediately to the Management Committee President or Chairperson for investigation and resolution;
- Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately the complainant will be kept informed of its progress and a resolution date;
- If the complaint is unable to be resolved orally, the complainant shall be advised that their complaint may be lodged in accordance with the options outlined under Written Complaints.

Written Complaints

Written complaints may be made by any external party (complainant) (or a person representing the complainant) about any service provided by PODC.

Written complaints may be made in one of the following formats:

- online form via feedback/complaints tab on PODC website.
- Letter (PO Box 4748, North Rocks, NSW 2151)
- Facsimile (02 9871 3193)
- Email. (info@podc.org.au)

Assistance will be provided to the complainant, where necessary, to help complete a written complaint or alternatively PODC Coordinator may collect and record sufficient details of the complaint, on behalf of the complainant, to enable proper assessment and resolution by PODC Management committee.

Where PODC Coordinator completes the complaint on behalf of the complainant, the information recorded shall be shown and/or read (where in-person) or read (over the phone) to the complainant, prior to its submission, to ensure the complaint details accurately represent the complaint.

- All written complaints should be addressed to the Advocate/Coordinator.
- Written complaints will be acknowledged by IAT within 5 working days from receipt and will be resolved within 30 working days (where possible).

All clients will be informed of their rights and responsibilities with regards to complaints and appeals at the earliest



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possible stage of their involvement with the organisation. There is reference to the complaints procedure on the PODC brochure.

Where the complaint has not been resolved within 30 working days the complainant will be advised over the telephone or in writing why the delay has occurred, what further action is required and when a result will be provided.

Where to make a Complaint

Complaints, comments or feedback on PODC services can be made through

Postal and Street Address:

Parents of Deaf Children

PO BOX 4748 North Rocks NSW 2151.

Dara House, RIDBC Campus,

361-365 North Rocks Rd, NSW 2151

Email:

Online Complaints/feedback form:

Participation of Clients in review and development of PODC Complaints policies:

PODC encourages clients (parents and carers) to participate in the review and development of PODC policies and procedures, including the complaints management strategies that relate to PODC services and staff etc. The PODC complaints policy is reviewed every two years and families are to be given 2 months notice to allow them to provide feedback to this process. The current PODC policy for management of feedback and complaints is available on our website.

COMPLAINTS TO THE NATIONAL DISABILITY COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Where a complainant has exhausted all avenues available through PODC to resolve the complaint, and does not accept a final resolution offered and wishes to formally pursue the matter via an external process, that person has a right, and may lodge a complaint with the National Disability Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS)

What is the CRRS?

The CRRS is a service that investigates complaints about Commonwealth funded disability advocacy services. If you have a problem with an advocacy service and need some help making a complaint, the CRRS can help.

Some of the problems the CRRS can help you with are:

- When you are not getting the support you need to access advocacy;
- When your advocate won't help you.
- The Disability Services Standards
- There are a number of disability service standards that Commonwealth funded disability advocacy services must follow. When looking at a complaint the CRRS will see if the service is meeting all of these standards.

Who can contact the CRRS?

Anybody who is concerned about a person using or working for a Commonwealth funded disability advocacy organisation can contact the CRRS:

The CRRS can be contacted by:

Phone: FREECALL 1800 88 00 52

TTY: 1800 301 130

The National Relay Service: 1800 555 677

Facsimile: (02) 9318 1372

Telephone Interpreter Service: 131 450

Mail: Locked Bag 2705, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

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RECORD KEEPING

A register of complaints and appeals will be kept in PODC complaints file/register. The register will be maintained by the admin assistant and will record the following for each complaint or appeal:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action

The complaints register and files will be confidential and access is restricted to the coordinator and admin assistant and management committee.

Results from this report will be reviewed by the coordinator and Management Committee and used to:

- inform service planning by including a review of complaints and appeals in all service planning, monitoring and evaluation activities
- inform decision making by including a report on complaints and appeals as a standard item on staff and management meeting agendas

OCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	[List any related policies]
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	[List related organisational documents or records]

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
[How often will this policy be reviewed?] Every 2 years	[Position of person responsible for reviewing policy] Coordinator	[Position of person/group who approves this policy] President

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1			
2			
3			



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