



## Policy Statement

This policy and procedure sets out how any person can provide feedback and make complaints about any aspect of Pathways SouthWest operations and the process of addressing or responding to feedback and complaints. The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Recognise, promote and protect individuals' rights, including the right to comment, compliment or complain.
- Provide an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for ensuring the perspective of consumers is heard.
- Provide information on the feedback handling process.
- Monitor feedback in an endeavour to improve the quality of services.
- Increase the level of satisfaction with the delivery of services.
- The recording of data to identify existing or emerging trends or systemic issues
- And to promote and demonstrate that Pathways SouthWest has an organisational culture that is focused on effective, person-centred complaints resolution and utilises feedback for continuous improvement.

## Scope

This policy and procedure applies to the organisation, staff, students, contractors and volunteers and all potential and existing consumers, their family members and other supporters. The policy also applies to other service providers, government agencies and members of the community.

## Definitions

- **Consumer:** Participant under NDIS whom are in receipt of services – for the purposes of this policy, participants will be referred to as consumers. Consumers are persons receiving a service from Pathways SouthWest.
- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. For the purpose of this policy and procedure a complaint is defined as an issue of a minor nature that can be resolved promptly or within 24 hours and does not require a detailed investigation. Complaints include an expression of displeasure, such as poor service and any verbal or written complaint directly related to the service (including general and notifiable complaints).
- **Complainant:** Means the person or organisation making the complaint.



- **Compliment:** An expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about an individual staff member, a team or a service.
- **Complimenter:** Means the person who is providing a compliment.
- **General complaint:** Addresses any aspect of the service e.g. a lost clothing item or the service's fees. The complaint must be dealt with as soon as is practicable to avoid escalation of the issue.
- **Grievance:** A formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature e.g. the service is in breach of a policy or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.
- **NDIS:** National Disability Insurance Scheme. The **NDIS** is a new way of providing individualised support for people with disability their families and carers. The **NDIS** will provide all **Australians** with a permanent and significant disability aged under 65 with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to live an ordinary life.
- **Manager/management:** Means the Chairperson of the Board of Management if complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Or CEO if the complaint is about an employee, consumer or carer
- **MHC:** Mental Health Commission. The Western Australian Mental Health Commission is responsible for planning and purchasing mental health, alcohol and other drug services.

## Principles

### 1. Procedure

Pathways SouthWest respects the right of consumers or members of the community to provide feedback about the services that we provide. Pathways SouthWest commitment to fair, equitable and timely resolution of complaints is also described in this Policy and related documents.

All feedback is to be recorded on the “Your Opinion Matters Form” and actioned by management who will sign off on all complaints when they have been dealt with. All personal information that Pathways SouthWest collects to manage feedback or complaints will be handled in accordance with privacy legislation and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.



Feedback and complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner and will only be discussed with the people directly involved. All information regarding feedback and complaints will be kept securely in accordance with the Records and Information Management

All consumers and community members will be made aware of their right to complain, the complaints procedure and the use and availability of advocates. Management will take steps to ensure that consumers feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

Information on Pathways SouthWest complaints procedure is included in consumer's information. The complaints procedure will be briefly explained to consumers at the time of entry into the service. If a situation develops where there is potential for a complaint, or a complaint is made then more information will be given about the process.

## 2. Fairness

Pathways SouthWest recognise the need to be fair to both the complainant and Pathways SouthWest employee/s against whom the complaint is made.

If a consumers complains, Pathways SouthWest will:

- Treat the complainant with tact, courtesy and fairness at all times;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of the complainant at all times;
- Not victimise or harass the complainant as a result of any complaint they make,
- Not discriminate against the complainant because of any disability, their colour, race, religion, age, sex or sexual orientation.

## 3. Complaints System

### First stage - Responding to a Complaint

- Recording via the "Your Opinion Matters Form". Verbal complaint can be documented using consumers words
- Acknowledgment of the complaint and attempt to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact.
- Where a complaint is not fully understood, contact the person who lodged the complaint to ensure good understanding of the issues correctly and advise.
- For complaints not resolved "on the spot", Pathways SouthWest aim to resolve the complaint and issue a response within 30 working days.

**Second stage** - If the complainant is still not satisfied, the CEO or the Chairperson of the Board of Management will review the person's complaint and the results of the review will be reported to the complainant.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, Pathways SouthWest will consider other options that may be available to achieve a resolution.



**Third stage** - If the complaint cannot be resolved within the organisation, the complainant will be referred to an outside agency.

#### 4. Actions

Pathways SouthWest will endeavour to resolve all complaints received as fairly as possible and in a timely manner. Some of the remedies that we may use to help resolve complaints include:

- Rectify mistakes - where a mistake has been made, it has taken too long to follow up a matter, or a matter has been overlooked, action will be taken to rectify the mistake or situation as soon as practicable;
- Employee training and counselling - where a complaint is made about an employee, there will be an investigation which may result in the employee being provided with training and/or counselling.

#### 5. Visibility and Transparency of the Complaints Process

Pathways SouthWest promote the existence of our Complaints Policy and Procedures through:

- Inclusion in the Consumers Statement of Rights and Responsibilities which is displayed prominently on our noticeboard.

#### 6. Access to the Complaints Process

- A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in person, by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail;
- Our staff will assist people who may have difficulty making a complaint. For example, interpreters will be provided to assist people with limited English who would prefer an interpreter;
- In addition, staff will complete a Complaints Form on behalf of anyone making a complaint over the phone or in person. They will also assist those with limited literacy skills by confirming the details of the complaint verbally;
- If it is difficult for a customer to personally make a complaint, a complaint may be made on their behalf by another person.

#### 7. Confidentiality of Complaints

Staff directly concerned with lodging, receiving and resolving the complaint must as far as possible maintain the confidentiality of the complainant. Staff may refer to the Pathways SouthWest Whistle Blower Policy.

#### 8. Complaints about Employees

Complaints about Pathways SouthWest employees should be directed to the CEO or in the case of a complaint against the CEO, it will be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.



Where and when appropriate the employee will be:

- Given the opportunity to comment;
- Informed of the final resolution/decision and the reason for that decision;
- And provided with a copy of the final reply to the complainant.

If management deems it appropriate, the employee will receive appropriate training and/or counselling.

Pathways SouthWest will provide a response to the complainant and inform the complainant of our decision and the reasons for that decision.

## 9. Compliments

All compliments will be acknowledged by a member of the management team to the complimenter, the compliment will be recorded in the feedback register (on SharePoint) and this will be fed back to the staff and considered as part of service improvement.

## 10. Review and Evaluation

Pathways SouthWest will monitor feedback and complaints to identify opportunities to improve choice and control for people accessing services and to improve the quality and type of services delivered.

## Key Contacts

Questions about how to implement this procedure should be directed to Pathways SouthWest CEO on [ceo@pathwayssouthwest.org.au](mailto:ceo@pathwayssouthwest.org.au) or phone 9791 1257

## Agencies that may be used for the purposes of advocacy and mediation:

### Health Consumers' Council (HCC)

Unit 6/40 Lord Street

Perth WA 6000

Telephone: 1800 620 780

Email: [info@hconc.org.au](mailto:info@hconc.org.au)

Website: [www.hconc.org.au](http://www.hconc.org.au)

### Advocacy South West Inc.

32 Wittenoom Street

BUNBURY WA 6230

Telephone: 9791 6444

Website: [www.advocacySouthWest.org.au](http://www.advocacySouthWest.org.au)

### Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHW)

13 Plaistowe Mews

# FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

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West Perth WA 6005  
Telephone: 9321 4994  
email: [admin@comhwa.org.au](mailto:admin@comhwa.org.au)  
Website: [www.comhwa.org.au](http://www.comhwa.org.au)

## Community Mediation Services

(Via Bunbury Community Legal Centre)  
101 Victoria Street  
BUNBURY WA 6230  
Telephone: 9791 3206  
Website: [www.swclc.org.au/](http://www.swclc.org.au/)

## Mental Health Law Centre (WA) Inc

96-98 Parry Street  
Perth WA 6000  
Telephone: 1800 620 285  
Email: [office@mhlcwa.org.au](mailto:office@mhlcwa.org.au)  
Website: [www.mhlcwa.org.au](http://www.mhlcwa.org.au)

## Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

G P O Box B61  
Perth WA 6838  
Email: [mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.hadsco.wa.gov.au](http://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au)

## NDIS Complaints Contacts:

Complaints can be lodged with the NDIA by:  
Email [feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au)  
Or phone 1800 800 110.

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## Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

G P O Box B61

Perth WA 6838

Email: [mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au)

Website: <https://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au>

### Relevant Legislation:

- Carers Recognition Act 2004 (WA)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984 (WA)
- Mental Health Act (WA) 2014
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Privacy Act 1988
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- National Standards for Disability Services
- National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013: Principles
- NDIS Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- NDIS Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018