

Guide Dogs.

POL 1009 Complaint Management Policy

Organisational

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Guide Dogs Queensland (GDQ) provides a means for external stakeholders to lodge complaints and to have these addressed and appropriately resolved if at all possible. Complaints are seen to play an important role in contributing to the Organisation's improved operations.

This policy has been framed around natural justice principles and individuals' rights as they are specified within the context of the Queensland State Disability Services Act 2006; the Australian Disability Services Act (1986), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 201 and the Human Rights Act 2019.

Definition

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with (for example) a decision, service or product. A person does not have to call their dissatisfaction a 'complaint', in order for it to be handled as a complaint by GDQ.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff receiving or managing complaints.

Statement

GDQ is committed to ensuring that its stakeholders, without prejudice, are able to discuss their concerns and lodge complaints if they consider that their rights have been adversely affected or the standards of a service have not been fulfilled or for any reason they are unsatisfied with their interaction with the Organisation and/or a matter related to the Organisation's operations.

GDQ welcomes feedback and advice whether it is complimentary or a complaint because it provides a means by which the organisation can continually improve its service and quality levels. It will respond to complaints in a fair, prompt and positive manner for the achievement of a resolution wherever possible.

1.1 Principles

To protect the rights of both the complainant and respondent, the following important principles and intentions will be observed.

- a) Complaints must clearly identify the issue and provide the available related information
- b) The person-centred approach to complaint management supports individuals and meets their needs, thus enabling both parties to work cooperatively within the process
- c) All complaints will be handled with absolute fairness and in accordance with the principles and intentions of natural justice:
 - the decision making process is free from bias
 - all parties have the right to be heard
 - the respondent has a right to know the details of the complaint
 - all parties are informed of the basis on which a decision is made.
- d) If required, complainants will be provided with assistance to lodge their complaint.
- e) The complaints process will be fully accessible to people with a disability and/or people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If required, translators or interpreters will participate in the complaints process.
- f) The rights of all parties to have others present or act on their behalf is acknowledged, supported and encouraged.
- g) The process will ensure complaints are handled fairly, reflecting the rights of both the complainant and the respondent(s) and undertaken:
 - in an open and consistent manner, with no retribution for people expressing their views
 - promptly and courteously
 - in a manner that ensures the rights of all people are acknowledged, honoured and protected.
- h) The details of the complaint (both discussions and records) shall be kept confidential from anyone who is not required to be involved in its resolution. Permission will be obtained from the relevant party/ies before any sensitive information is released to help resolve a dispute.
- i) Complaints will be considered within the context of a continuous improvement framework.
- j) GDQ employees receiving complaints must be treated with respect. Abusive, aggressive or disrespectful behaviour towards staff during interactions will not be tolerated.

1.2 Complaint Lodgement

Lodgement methods include:

- a) face to face communication;
- b) telephone via the main switchboard number 3500 9000;
- c) print;
- d) Braille;
- e) audio;
- f) electronic formats (including the website's online feedback form or the organisation's generic email address: feedback@guidedogsqld.com.au).

The Quality Department is responsible for receiving all complaints and directing them to the appropriate staff member for treatment. All complaints are registered in the Feedback Register.

1.3 Contact with Complainant

The person managing the complaint must endeavour to contact the complainant within five business days to:

- a) acknowledge its receipt
- b) provide his/her name, title and contact details
- c) obtain further information, if required, in order to help assess the manner in which the complaint will be addressed
- d) provide an estimated timeframe until resolution
- e) check if the complainant requires further assistance or support while the matter is under investigation
- f) if the matter is not resolved within the estimated timeframe, provide a status report with revised timeframe, and repeat each ten business days if necessary until the matter is closed.

Human rights complaints should be responded to within 45 days, after which time the complaints may be escalated to the Human Rights Commission if no acceptable resolution is underway.

1.4 External Agency or Mediator

If a complainant feels the matter is not resolved to their level of satisfaction he/she may choose to pursue his/her complaint via external avenues.

Depending on the circumstances, this might involve (but is not restricted to) any of the following organisations contact details of which may be given to the complainant.

- Complaints Unit, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability;
- Blind Citizens Australia;

- National Complaint Resolution and Referral Service;
- Equal Opportunity Commission;
- Australian Human Rights Commission;
- The Public Advocate;
- Advocacy Agencies such as Queensland Advocacy Service, Speaking Up for you Inc.;
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission: The NDIS Commission can take complaints about:
 - Services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
 - Services and supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard
 - A complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission by:
 - Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677 (Interpreters can be arranged).
 - [National Relay Service](#) and ask for 1800 035 544.
 - Completing a [complaint contact form](#).
- Human Rights Commission

1.5 Monitoring of the complaint management system

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- Ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints, and
- Identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system

Associated Documents/Legislation/Standard

Documents

- PRO 1009 Complaint Handling Procedure

Legislation

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018)
- Human Rights Act 2019

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