

Compliments and Complaints

Rationale

Compliments and complaints provide valuable feedback about the level of client and community satisfaction with our services. Along with other forms of feedback, they provide an opportunity to improve the delivery of services. They must be handled effectively and promptly, and recorded for coordination, analysis, and reporting.

Purpose

This policy provides an opportunity for service users, their families, and other key stakeholders in the community, to provide feedback to LSV as well as a process for LSV to respond to any feedback.

Scope

This policy covers all feedback including compliments and complaints regarding any aspect of LSV's services, activities, and employees. It applies to all staff members, clients, and community.

Relevant Legislation and Standards

Disability Act 2006 - DFFH Services.

Disability Act 2006 - Victorian legislation.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (CRPD)

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018

Policy Statement

LSV acknowledges everyone's right to express their opinion about our services. We will provide our service users and the community with the opportunity to influence the way we work through meaningful engagement, listening and responding to feedback, and protecting their confidentiality and privacy. LSV's quality management system supports continuous improvement, using outcomes, risk related data, evidence-informed practice and feedback from Clients and employees.

Compliments and complaints provide valuable feedback about the level of our service user's satisfaction with LSV services. Along with other forms of feedback, this provides an opportunity to improve the delivery of our services. LSV resolves to investigate any complaints as soon as practicable, in a way that respects and values the person's feedback. This is an important factor in restoring confidence in the organisation.

Definitions

Term	Definition
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Compliment	An expression of praise, gratitude or encouragement about the services provided, an individual employee or team who provide the services or the organisation in general.
Complaint	In this instance, a complaint is seen as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service (s) provided by LSV or with an employee of the organisation. This can also include how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Allegation	A claim that an illegal act has occurred. Allegations are always investigated and sometimes an external authority undertakes the investigation such as the police.

Procedure

In the event of a substantiated complaint, all relevant policies, procedures, and practices will be reviewed and updated to improve the professional practice and service delivery of the organisation.

Complaints that arise from physical, verbal, sexual and/or emotional harassment or abuse are covered by the procedures outlined in this policy (also see Freedom from Abuse Policy). Sexual harassment or abuse is defined as or includes any coercive, humiliating, or offensive behaviour of a sexual nature.

LSV will:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person who makes a complaint, and any affected person with disability, is advised how to make a complaint to the NDIS Commission.
- Provide appropriate support and assistance in contacting the NDIS Commission in relation to a complaint, to any person making a complaint, and any affected person with disability.
- Receive and acknowledge all complaints in a fair and positive manner.
- Make every attempt to resolve the complaint appropriately, and undertake any warranted improvement to policies, procedures, and service delivery.
- Encourage and welcome the involvement of a person's advocate when receiving and responding to a complaint.
- Respond to complaints in a timely manner, without retribution or causing loss of service to the person making the complaint.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process.
- Inform the complainant of the outcome of a complaint and seek feedback about both the complaint and the process.

Every effort will be made to resolve any complaint informally. LSV will encourage and give people who use the service the opportunity to resolve their complaints directly with the people involved. If the person is not satisfied with the result of these informal discussions, then the person and/or advocate should follow the documented protocol.

During the process LSV will:

- Encourage people to use an advocate for support if required.
- Facilitate the person's use of external agencies for support and/or advice.
- Undertake to explain to the person, how complaints may be raised and resolved.
- Ensure that people are assisted to understand this policy.
- Ensure this policy complies with the principles of natural justice and human rights.

Minor Complaint

A complaint is considered minor when:

- It can be resolved in the first point of contact.
- All parties reach agreement and are satisfied with the outcome.
- The facts are not disputed.
- The issue or occurrence is considered by the consumer to be of a minor nature.
- Minimal concern or distress has been caused to the person complaining or the family member concerned.
- It is foreseeable that the issue can be resolved within 8 - 10 working days.

Major Complaint

A record on the complaints register must be made and a Compliments and Complaints form must be completed for all major complaints.

A complaint is considered major when:

- It is unable to be resolved at the first point of contact.
- It has not been resolved after one or more attempts to settle it informally. (i.e., a recurrent complaint).
- The person lodging the complaint feels that they cannot resolve the issue in a straightforward manner with the other person/people involved.
- An issue or occurrence has caused some stress to the person lodging the complaint or their family member/s.

The LSV complaints management and resolution system will also ensure that complaints are referred or notified to any other bodies as required. (National Disability Insurance Scheme Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018) and will comply with any relevant mandatory reporting or other obligation it has under the Australian law including, work health and safety laws. For example, a complaint that raises an alleged criminal offence must be referred to Victoria Police.

This process should be used for complaints received in any form (phone, in person, from the website and in writing).

The Compliment and Complaint Management Process is simplified into five steps:

- Receive
- Record
- Acknowledge
- Resolve

- Communicate Resolution.

Receive

- Assess the complaint for severity, safety, complexity, impact, and prioritise situations that may pose an immediate threat or danger and require immediate action.
- Complaints considered to be major in nature must be reported to the CEO, or the most senior staff member immediately.
- Complaints that relate to policy matters or have the potential to involve legal action against LSV and/or that have major implications for the reputation of LSV should be brought to the attention of the CEO immediately and will be forwarded to the President of the Board by the CEO as soon as possible.
- If a minor complaint relates to a particular program area, then the complaint should be referred to the relevant employee.
- For a genuinely minor complaint (as defined), it should be within the expertise of the staff member responsible for that area to come to an agreed resolution with the person making the complaint. If the staff member identifies that this will not easily be achieved, or if there are other parties involved in the issue (such as other staff or volunteers), the staff member should discuss the complaint with the CEO. The complaint may at this point be redefined as a major complaint.
- Ask the complainant what outcome they are seeking.
- Inform the complainant clearly of the complaint process, the time the process takes and set realistic expectations.
- Ensure accountability and action all commitments made.

Record

- Collect and record all information that is relevant and appropriate to the compliment or complaint, in its original and simplest form.
- If the complainant wishes to proceed, then the person receiving the complaint should request their assistance in commencing a Complaints, Compliments and Feedback form.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information collected and use a system that restricts access to those involved in managing the compliment or complaint.
- The CEO will ensure that de-identified data regarding the general nature of any complaint is forwarded in the monthly report to the Board along with steps taken to prevent a re-occurrence of the issue.
- If a complaint is made regarding an employee or volunteer, that person will be notified of the complaint and afforded due process and appropriate support.

Acknowledge

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint early to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the person who raised the complaint.
- Where a person requests to remain anonymous when providing feedback, follow up contact may not be possible or expected.

- Discuss required outcomes and provide realistic expectations and timeframes. The complainant should be given a date by which initial contact will be made from the relevant program area or the CEO. This should be within three working days of the complaint being received unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Avoid any conflict of interest by appointing a person unrelated to the matter as an investigator.

Resolve

- Keep the complainant involved and informed of the progress of the complaint and discuss any disparities identified in the information recorded.
- If Additional information is required, give a reasonable timeframe for it to be provided.
- Consider extensions to timeframes for information provision only where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant with an explanation of the need.
- Continue to record all decisions or actions of the complaint investigation in the Compliment and Complaint Management System.
- Focus on the identified complaint matters only.

Communicate Resolution

- Outcome – Where possible, discuss the outcome with the complainant and provide written advice, including what further action is available and allowing an opportunity to make further contact once that advice is received. This advice should include how to access further support and the NDIS complaints process 1800 035 544 / or TTY 133 677, <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/Clients/disabilityadvocacy>
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, a minimum of one further review will be provided to allow a review of the initial investigation and collection of further information.
- Allow an opportunity for the complainant to provide feedback on their experience of the process.
- LSV will endeavour to fully resolve all major complaints within 21 working days from receiving the complaint.
- If, after 21 working days, the issue remains unresolved and there is no foreseeable resolution to the complaint, LSV will seek to engage the services of a registered mediation service and commence mediation within seven working days.
- If the issue remains unresolved following mediation and is in relation to a policy or legislative issue, then LSV will seek advice / intervention from the relevant funding / legislative body. LSV will be bound by the recommendations of this body.

Receiving and Responding to a Compliment

- Log all compliments on Compliments and Complaints Register.
- Forward all compliments to CEO for appropriate action.
- The CEO/Executive Management Team will determine response / further action.
- Where relevant, provide report to Board of Management.

Receiving and Responding to an Employee Complaint.

Any employee complaints will also be recorded on the complaints register. (Located on LSV network) and the following details should be recorded at this time:

- The complaint number (this should simply be the next available number on the register). This number should be noted on all documentation in relation to the complaint.
- The date of the complaint.
- The name of the complainant. The complainant can opt to be recorded as 'unnamed' on the register but their details, for following up the complaint, will still need to be separately (confidentially) collected on the Complaints Comments and Feedback Form.
- The nature of the complaint.
- The program area (if relevant).
- The person to whom the complaint has been referred.

This process allows LSV the opportunity to track the progress of the resolution of the complaint and to use the complaint to assist with service improvement.

Document Information - References or Related Documents

Description	Location
Quality Improvement Policy	LSV Policy and Procedure Manual
Code of Conduct Policy	LSV Policy and Procedure Manual
National Disability Insurance Scheme Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018	https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/managing-complaints

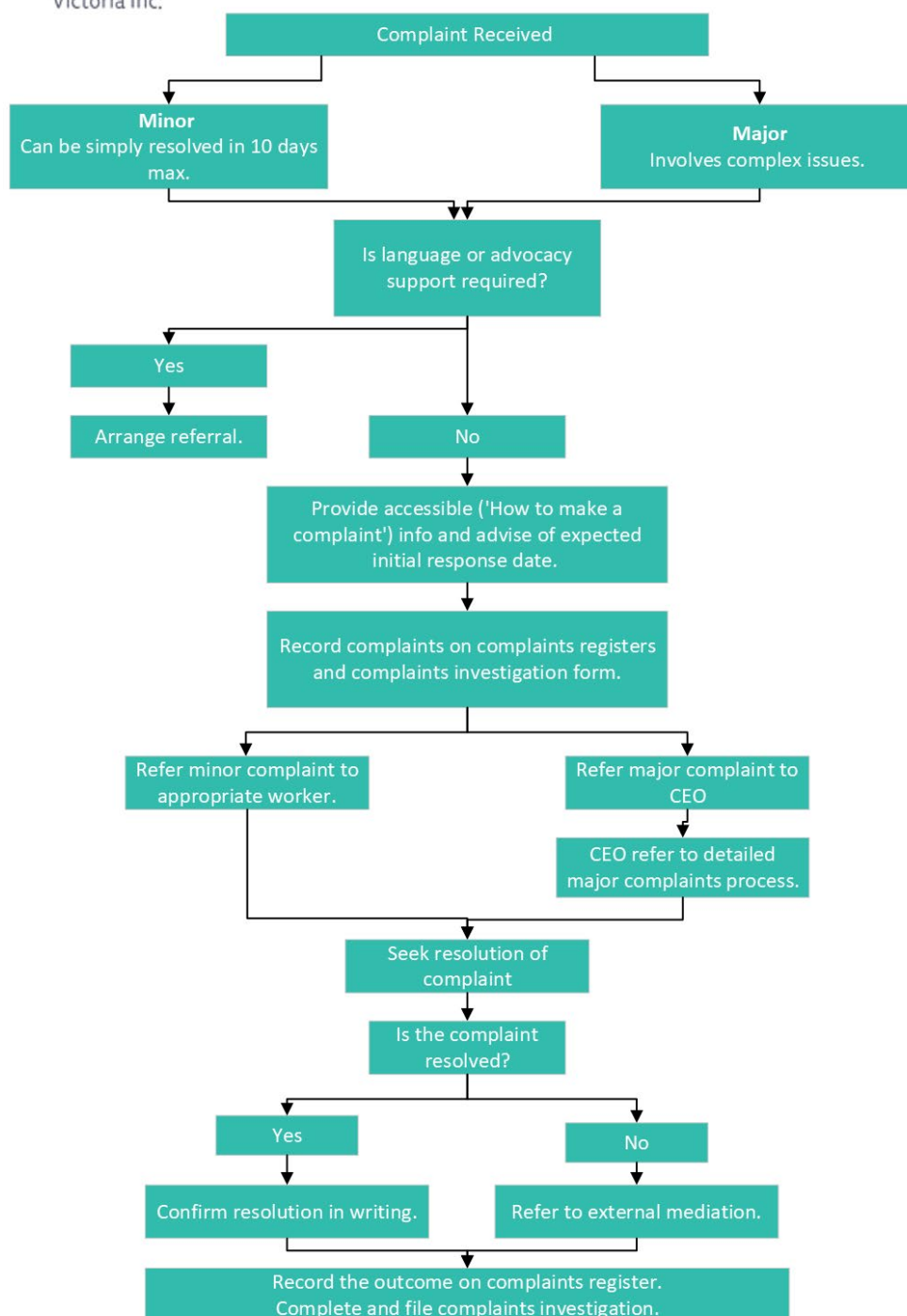
Approval and Review	Responsible
Lead Author	CEO
Approver	LSV Policy Committee
Date Endorsed	July 2020
Date Reviewed	July 2022
Timeframe for next renewal	July 2025

Version History

Version No.	Date	Summary of amendment(s)
1	2020	Created
2	2022	Reviewed and amendments included: Change of organisation name Update links Add related policies

Quick Reference for Handling Complaints

(This is a guide only; please refer to complaints procedure for more information)



Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Form

Life Skills Victoria

Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Form

LSV is committed to providing the best possible service to our service users, their family and supports. We value your feedback so we can improve the services we provide.

Please let us know what we do well and where we can improve our services.

Let us know your response below:			
Complaint <input type="checkbox"/>		Compliment <input type="checkbox"/>	
Feedback <input type="checkbox"/>			
Personal Details			
Do you wish to remain anonymous?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Service User			
First Name		Last Name	
Address		Postcode	
Telephone		Mobile	
Email			
Complainant if different from Service User			
First Name		Last Name	
Address		Postcode	
Telephone		Mobile	
Email			
Feedback Information			
LSV Service area:			
Please share any feedback or concerns. Include what led to making the complaint, compliment or feedback, the approximate dates and who was involved?			

Have you had the chance to discuss your concerns with anyone at LSV or another agency or person for assistance with these concerns?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please tell us with whom and what was the outcome?

What outcomes would you like as a result of providing your feedback?
Privacy

<p>Life Skills Victoria (LSV) is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and handle personal information that you provide on this form only for investigating and responding to your complaint, compliment, or feedback.</p> <p>We will only use your information in accordance with relevant privacy and other laws. For us to provide the best possible service, we may need to share your personal information with other services that deal with the concerns identified in your feedback.</p> <p>Please be advised that compliments may be used and published by LSV to promote our services. No personal or identifying information will be used. If you do not want your compliment to be published, please let us know. If you choose to remain anonymous, LSV may be unable to respond to your complaint, compliment, or feedback.</p> <p>If you wish to further contact LSV regarding the personal information that you provide on this form, please call 03 51277999 or office@lifeskills.com.au</p> <p>You also have the right to access your information and seek its correction under the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>. For information about making a Freedom of Information application contact Freedom of Information Unit on 03 9096 8449 or 1300 650 172.</p>			
Person completing this form			
Declaration			
I declare the information I have provided is true and correct			
Signature:		Date:	