



<b>Document number</b>	POL-1294	<b>Approval date</b>	22-Jun-2023
<b>Approved by</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>Next review date</b>	22-Jun-2024
<b>Document owner</b>	Enterprise Risk and Compliance Manager		
<b>Applies to</b>	yourtown		

## purpose

This policy outlines the handling and management of feedback and complaints at **yourtown**.

For further guidance and information regarding safeguarding feedback and complaints, refer to the Safeguarding in Practice – Policy and Procedure.

Internal issues and grievances involving **yourtown** personnel are handled in accordance with People and Culture Policies and Procedures.

## scope

This policy applies to all **yourtown** personnel.

## using feedback and complaints to improve quality and service provision

Information received through our feedback and complaint processes is used to act on and resolve the issues and suggestions reported to us. **yourtown** also reviews the feedback and complaints we receive as part of monitoring and improving our services to best meet the needs of client groups and individual service users, and our supporters, and to assure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements. Summary information from our feedback and complaints systems is analysed and used in our business planning and budgeting processes to ensure the quality and effectiveness of our operations.

Positive feedback is communicated to relevant personnel as part of celebrating our successes and recognising the work performed by our personnel. We may also use feedback from stakeholders in our publications or newsletters. This is always done in a way that protects the identity of the individual, or if this is not possible or appropriate, with express permission.

Personal information received via feedback and complaints is not used for any other purpose unless the use and/or disclosure of personal information is authorised or permitted by the Australian Privacy Principles or any other law, such as where an individual faces a serious threat of harm.

## receiving feedback and complaints

Feedback and complaints can be received in a variety of ways. An individual may:

- speak directly with any **yourtown** team member, who will enter the feedback into the quality improvement system.
- complete an online feedback form via the feedback link on the **yourtown** or Kids Helpline websites.
- write to: **yourtown**, GPO Box 2469, BRISBANE QLD 4001.
- participate in a client satisfaction survey or program evaluation facilitated by **yourtown**.

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Feedback received by other mechanisms (e.g. social media and to Board Members) will be directed to a staff member and recorded in the quality improvement system for appropriate consideration.

An individual may provide feedback on behalf of themselves or somebody else.

Subject to privacy considerations and any formal protocol in place, a **yourtown** service partner may provide us with information about feedback or complaints received from **yourtown** clients.

## responding to anonymous feedback and the use of pseudonyms

Anyone providing feedback or making a complaint is entitled to remain anonymous or use a pseudonym. In such cases, **yourtown** will endeavour to act on the feedback or resolve the complaint but may be limited in what action can be taken in investigating and/or acting upon the matter given the particular circumstances.

## providing assistance

If requested, **yourtown** will assist an individual to provide feedback or lodge a complaint by:

- guiding the individual to the feedback link on the **yourtown** website.
- entering their feedback or complaint into the quality improvement system on their behalf.
- providing on-going support throughout the feedback or complaint resolution process to the individual and relevant personnel.
- coordinating an interpreter, if required.

An individual providing feedback or making a complaint may appoint an external party to advocate on their behalf.

## responding to feedback and complaints

**yourtown** treats all feedback seriously and investigates and responds to all feedback and complaints received. **yourtown** will treat any individual providing feedback or making a complaint with dignity and respect, and treats all information provided as confidential in accordance with our corporate values, Consumer Rights Position Statement, Privacy Policy, and Records Management Policy.

Only authorised personnel are able to access and handle feedback, complaints, and related personal information.

If feedback or a complaint concerns a third-party, such as another service provider or agency, **yourtown** will assist the individual to provide feedback directly to that party.

As applicable, **yourtown** complies with all response timeframes agreed to or required by funding bodies and service partners and works with such organisations to address and resolve complaints that are subject to these requirements.

## managing complaints

In receiving a complaint, **yourtown**:

- enters the complaint into the quality improvement system (if not entered directly by the complainant).
- contacts the individual (if appropriate to do so and contact details have been provided) to confirm:
  - the details of the matter.

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- the individual's expectations, including information to be provided upon resolution of the matter.
- the resolution process and any additional support available or required.
- the name and contact details of a **yourtown** contact person.
- investigates the issue raised as quickly as possible to decide on any actions or improvements that may be required. This will usually be undertaken by the supervisor or the manager of the relevant program or service (or where appropriate, an alternate investigator appointed by the relevant Departmental Head or Chief Executive Officer).
- advises relevant government departments and/or external agencies where a specific reporting requirement exists.
- responds to the individual about the outcome of the investigation as quickly as possible and no later than fifteen (15) business days after lodgement. If the matter cannot be resolved within this time, **yourtown** will advise the individual of the reasons for the delay and provide a revised timeframe.
- ensures appropriate records and case notes are maintained in accordance with **yourtown** policies and procedures, any applicable program or contractual requirements, and applicable Privacy legislation. If applicable, we may need to provide information about the complaint and/or its resolution to a service partner or funding body in accordance with a formal protocol.

In receiving other types of feedback (such as compliments), **yourtown** acknowledges the receipt of the feedback with an appropriate expression of appreciation and response.

## providing services to those providing feedback and making complaints

We strive to maintain the highest level of service to all our clients and supporters, regardless of the circumstances. To this end, **yourtown** handles feedback and complaints from stakeholders in a fair and just manner.

No individual will be disadvantaged in any way if they provide feedback or make a complaint about **yourtown**. **yourtown** encourages anyone who feels they have been disadvantaged in this way to raise the matter directly with the manager of the relevant service or program.

## appeals

### Internal Appeal

If an individual is not satisfied with **yourtown**'s response to their feedback or complaint, they may write to the Chief Executive Officer at: **yourtown**, GPO Box 2469, BRISBANE QLD 4001.

The Chief Executive Officer will respond within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written request.

### External Review

If the individual is still not satisfied with **yourtown**'s response:

- The individual may seek an external review by an alternative dispute resolution service. A list of independent mediators who may be able to assist with resolving a dispute has been included in appendix a of this document. **yourtown** may participate in an alternative dispute resolution process providing all parties agree to be bound by a confidentiality agreement.
- Where applicable, an individual may lodge a concern with the relevant government funding body.

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## responsibilities

Departmental Heads are responsible for ensuring feedback and complaints are investigated, actioned and closed in a timely and effective manner, and in accordance with any agreed or required timeframe.

All personnel are responsible for:

- assisting an individual to lodge feedback or a complaint, whenever requested.
- participating in feedback or complaint processes, as requested or assigned.
- maintaining appropriate records relating to feedback and complaints.

## training and awareness

**yourtown** ensures all personnel with complaint management responsibilities are aware of and understand feedback and complaints resolution processes, and that all personnel understand how they can support individuals to submit feedback and complaints.

Where information received feedback and/or complaints is used for training purposes, any related personal information will be de-identified to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned.

## referenced documents

- Safeguarding in Practice – Policy and procedures
- Consumer Rights Position Statement
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Duty of Care Position Statement/Procedures/Guide
- Quality Improvement System (QIS) Administration Procedure and Guideline
- Feedback links and forms on the **yourtown** and Kids Helpline websites

## related documents

- Feedback and Continuous Improvement Position Statement
- Privacy Notices – various
- Program-specific client information handbooks and equivalent documents.

## external documents

- Australian Privacy Principles Guidelines: Privacy Act 1988 (OAIC, 2014)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and associated Australian Privacy Principles
- Relevant State/Territory Privacy Legislation – various

## document review details

Review Details	Reviewed On	Revision
Updated to new template. Included references to Safeguarding in Practice - Policy and Procedure.	22-Jun-2023	V2



## Appendix A

### Independent Mediators List

Mediator	Link	Cost	Contact Information
<b>QLD</b>			
<b>QLD Training Ombudsman</b>	<a href="http://trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au/contact/">http://trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au/contact/</a>	Free.	P: 1800 773 048 E: info@trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au PO Box 15090, City East Qld 4002
<b>Dispute Resolution Centre</b>	<a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediationand-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-outof-court/mediation">https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediationand-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-outof-court/mediation</a>	In most cases it is free to take part in mediation. The DRB only charges a fee for facilitations and workplace mediations.	<a href="https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legalmediation-and-justice-of-thepeace/settling-disputes-out-ofcourt/dispute-resolution-centres">https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legalmediation-and-justice-of-thepeace/settling-disputes-out-ofcourt/dispute-resolution-centres</a>
<b>NSW</b>			
<b>Community Justice Centres</b>	<a href="http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/">http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/</a>	Free. Can provide alternative dispute resolution services tailored to help people solve conflicts.	P: 1800 990 777 E: cjc@justice.nsw.gov.au Community Justice Centres Locked Bag 5111 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
<b>VIC</b>			
<b>The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria</b>	<a href="https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/">https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/</a>	Free.	P: 1300 372 888 E: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au 4/456 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, Vic 3000 Contact information can be found here: <a href="https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/aboutus/contact-us">https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/aboutus/contact-us</a>
<b>ACT</b>			
<b>Community Justice Centres</b>	<a href="http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/">http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/</a>	Free.	P: 1800 990 777 E: cjc@justice.nsw.gov.au Community Justice Centres Locked Bag 5111 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
<b>Conflict Resolution Service</b>	<a href="https://crs.org.au/">https://crs.org.au/</a>	Fee list can be found here: <a href="https://crs.org.au/fees/">https://crs.org.au/fees/</a> .	P: 02 6189 05 90 (main office) E: admin@crs.org.au

Mediator	Link	Cost	Contact Information
			3.10 Griffin Centre 20 Genge Street Canberra City ACT 2601 <a href="https://crs.org.au/about-crs/contactus/">https://crs.org.au/about-crs/contactus/</a>
<b>TAS</b>			
<b>LegalAid Tasmania (List of mediation services available)</b>	<a href="https://www.legalaid.tas.gov.au">https://www.legalaid.tas.gov.au</a>	Free. Focus on economically and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians.	P: 1300 366 611
<b>SA</b>			
<b>Office of the Training Advocate</b>	<a href="http://trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/">http://trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/</a>	Free	P: 1800 006 488 F: 08 8226 4278 E: <a href="mailto:trainingadvocate@sa.gov.au">trainingadvocate@sa.gov.au</a> GPO Box 320 Adelaide SA 5001
<b>Mediation Australia</b>	<a href="http://www.mediationaustralia.net.au/">http://www.mediationaustralia.net.au/</a>	The parties share the cost of mediation. Mediation will only commence after the parties have signed a letter appointing the Mediator.	P: 08 8379 2910 F: 08 8379 2650 Level 2, 229 Greenhill Road DULWICH South Australia 5065
<b>WA</b>			
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau</b>	<a href="http://www.cabwa.com.au/mediation-service/community-mediation">http://www.cabwa.com.au/mediation-service/community-mediation</a>	A pre-mediation appointment costs \$75 per party. A mediation costs \$150 per party	<a href="http://www.cabwa.com.au/contact-us">http://www.cabwa.com.au/contact-us</a>
<b>NT</b>			
<b>Community Justice Centre</b>	<a href="https://nt.gov.au/law/processes/resolving-disputes-without-going-to-court">https://nt.gov.au/law/processes/resolving-disputes-without-going-to-court</a>		Community Justice Centre, Level 1 Darwin Local Court, Nicholas Place Darwin 0801 P: 1800 000 473