

Complaints and Feedback Policy

Purpose

This policy explains how Community Living and Respite Services (CLRS) enables, receives, manages, and learns from complaints and feedback

It affirms the right of all people to speak up without fear of detriment, whether to raise a concern, make a complaint, or share feedback.

CLRS values all feedback—positive or negative—as an opportunity to improve.

CLRS provides a system that is accessible, culturally safe, procedurally fair, and person-centred, and applies to all CLRS services, programs and workplace participants (employees, contractors, volunteers, students) interacting with clients.

Complaints and feedback may be made by clients, families/carers, advocates, representatives, visitors, community members, other stakeholders or anonymously.

Out of scope:

- Complaints about the funding bodies or partners.
- Complaints that are solely employment matters follow CLRS HR/Grievance procedures (unless they relate to participant safety or rights).

Definitions

Term	Description
Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction about CLRS services, decisions, staff conduct, or our contractors/volunteers where a response or outcome is expected.
Feedback	A comment, suggestion or compliment that may not require a formal response.
Concern	An issue raised that may become a complaint if unresolved.
Anonymous complaint	A complaint made without providing identity or contact details.
Advocate	An independent person or organisation who represents a person's views and choices.
Procedural fairness (natural justice)	Fair processes including unbiased decision making, the right to be heard, and decisions based on evidence.
Retaliation/Victimisation	Any adverse action because a person made or supported a complaint (prohibited).
Incident/Reportable incident	Any event that causes or has the potential to cause harm to a person, and which must be managed and reported under relevant funding reporting frameworks. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NDIS Reportable Incidents• CIMS (Client Incident Management System) – DFFH• TAC Serious Incident Reporting

Policy Statement

At CLRS, feedback and complaints are welcome. They help us learn and improve our supports. Everyone has the right to raise concerns without fear. We will listen, act, and use what we learn to make our services better.

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Complaints and Feedback Policy



We accept complaints from anyone, including anonymously.

We make it easy to complain:

- in person, by phone, email, letter, easy read form, through interpreters, assistive technology, or with a trusted person or advocate.
- We provide information about how to complain in our service agreement, client handbook and via our website.
- Complaints can also be made directly to the CLRS board to make complaining about the CEO or senior leadership team easier.

We commit to acknowledging all complaints promptly and responding within clear timeframes. Our goal is to resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, and in a timely manner, keeping the person informed throughout the process.

We provide information about independent advocacy and communication supports whenever needed.

We treat all complaints fairly, respectfully, and confidentially, following the principles of procedural fairness. This means decisions will be unbiased, based on evidence, and everyone involved will have the right to be heard. No one will be disadvantaged, adversely affected, or treated unfairly for making or supporting a complaint.

Where a complaint raises serious issues (e.g. abuse, neglect, serious injury, unlawful contact/assault, death, or unauthorised restrictive practice), we will activate our Incident Management Policy and meet all reporting requirements as per the funding requirements.

We provide culturally safe and accessible options for First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with communication support needs.

Where complaints cannot be solved through consultation and collaboration, CLRS will work in line with our Grievance Policy

Our workers are trained to handle complaints with care and procedural fairness. We keep clear records, track trends, and use what we learn for continuous quality improvement.

Additional commitments

- **TAC Attendant Care clients:** We report complaints or concerns suggesting risk of harm directly to TAC as required by TAC Attendant Care Provider Guidelines and maintain relevant documentation.
- **Children and young people in OOHC:** We provide child friendly, developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed complaint pathways. Children and young people are informed about independent complaint pathways (e.g. CCYP, Child Safety Officers).

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Feedback Handling

CLRS encourages feedback from participants, families, advocates, and other stakeholders. Feedback may include compliments, suggestions, or general comments about services or staff.

Feedback can be provided through the same channels as complaints: in person, phone, email, letter, Easy Read, interpreters, assistive technology, or via a trusted person or advocate.

All feedback is recorded and reviewed regularly. Positive feedback is shared with staff and teams. Suggestions are considered as part of service planning and continuous improvement.

Feedback that raises concerns may be treated as a complaint if the person requests a response or resolution.

Accessibility, Cultural Safety & Supports

CLRS will support accessibility, cultural safety and supports when providing feedback and complaints

- Provide interpreters, translated materials, easy read documents, and support with assistive technology on request.
- Offer independent advocacy information at any point.
- Provide culturally safe options for First Nations and CALD communities such as meeting on country, avoiding jargon and explain processes clearly.
- Accommodate communication support needs.
- For children/young people: use developmentally appropriate, trauma informed- approaches; provide safe and private ways to be heard; co-design where possible; enable access to independent pathways (e.g. CCYP).

External Avenues

People can also complain directly to external organisations

- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:** 1800 035 544; [ndiscommission.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)
- **TAC (Transport Accident Commission):** complaints can be made via the TAC website, complaints@tac.vic.gov.au or 1800 332 556.
- **Department of Families, Fairness and Housing:** complaints can be made via the DFFH website (<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint-children-and-young-people-care-services>), feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au or 1300 884 706.
- **Commission for Children and Young People (Vic):** 1300 782 978 (free call) or contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au
- **Victorian Disability Services Commissioner:** complaints can be made via the Disability Services Commissioner website ([Making a complaint - Disability Services Commissioner](#)) or 1800 677 342
Privacy complaints: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Online at www.oaic.gov.au, GPO Box 5288, Sydney NSW 2001, [1300 363 992](tel:1300363992)

CLRS will assist people to make complaints to external avenues if requested.

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Complaints and Feedback Policy

Privacy & Confidentiality

Complaint information is collected, used, stored, and disclosed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988, Australian Privacy Principles, and the CLRS Privacy Policy.

Access is limited to those who need the information to manage the complaint or meet legal requirements.

Anonymous complaints are de-identified on record; trends are reported in de-identified form.

Training & Capability

All workers receive induction covering: complaints handling, procedural fairness and Incident Management relevant to their role.

Records & Retention

All complaints are recorded in the Complaints Register, including details of the issue, actions taken, outcomes, and communication with the complainant.

Records are retained in line with the CLRS Archiving and Retention of Records Policy (minimum seven years from closure, or longer if required by law or funders).

Documents are stored securely and are auditable.

Governance, Monitoring & Reporting

Complaints and feedback information and trends are monitored or reported via the following:

- **Monthly:** Senior Managers monitor open complaints, timeframes, risk, and actions.
- **Quarterly:** Deidentified summary to the Board addressing volumes, themes, systemic issues, outcomes, and CQI actions.
- **Annually:** A report on the number and type of complaints is currently provided to the Victorian Disability Services Commission.
- **As required:** Immediate escalation of serious/systemic risks; resource adjustments recommended to the Board/Executive.
- **Assurance:** Internal audits of complaints handling are conducted annually to review the systems effectiveness and identify improvements.

External Framework

This Procedure illustrates CLRS's adherence to the:

- NDIS Practice Standards (2021) and NDIS Code of Conduct, specifically within the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators:
 - Core Module 2: Provider Governance and Operational Management, under Outcomes for; Quality Management and Feedback and Complaints Management
- Social Service Standards
 - Standard 4
- TAC Attendant Care Guidelines

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Complaints and Feedback Policy

- The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Complaints Management Policy for Funded Organisations
- Child Safe Standards: Child-friendly complaint pathways and trauma-informed approaches.
- Privacy Act 1988: Explicit privacy and confidentiality commitments.
- NDIS Code of Conduct: Respect, fairness, and transparency in handling complaints.

References and associated documents

- NDIS Act 2013
- NDIS Practice Standards (Complaints and Incident Management)
- *NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018*
- Privacy Act 1988
- TAC Attendant Care Provider Guidelines
- Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- CLRS Incident Management Policy & Procedure
- CLRS Information Management/Privacy Policy
- CLRS Records Management Policy
- CLRS Code of Conduct
- CLRS Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practice Policy
- CLRS Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Easy Read: How to Make a Complaint (attachment 1)
- Complaint Form (standard and Easy Read)

Amendments

Version Date	Author	Description of Key
September 2004	Senior Leaders	Document Created
October 2019	Senior Leaders	Reviewed
December 2022	Senior Leaders	Reviewed
September 2025	Director of Operations	Updated to align further with person centred practice and simple language. Addition of the easy read format as an attachment.

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Attachment One: CLRS – Complaints and Feedback Policy (Easy Read)

This Easy Read policy explains how you can tell us what you think and how we will respond.

About this policy

This policy is for everyone who uses Community Living and Respite Services (CLRS) and their families, carers and supporters.

You can give feedback (good or bad) or make a complaint at any time.

You will not be treated badly for speaking up.

Your rights

- You have the right to speak up without fear.
- You can have an advocate or trusted person help you.
- You can complain anonymously if you want.
- You can get language help like interpreters or Easy Read.
- You can complain to CLRS or to outside organisations.

How to give feedback or make a complaint

- Talk to a CLRS worker or manager in person.
- Phone our office: 54802 388
- Email: feedback@clrs.org.au
- Write a letter: PO Box 242, Echuca Vic 3564
- Use our Easy Read form
- Ask someone you trust or an advocate to help you.
- You can also complain directly to the CLRS Board if your complaint is about the CEO or senior leaders.

We will help you

- We can provide easy read and communication supports.
- We can connect you with an independent advocate.

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Complaints and Feedback Policy

What happens when you complain

- 1) We acknowledge your complaint quickly and tell you what will happen next.
- 2) We listen to you and anyone you choose to support you. We keep you updated.
- 3) We look into what happened. We make fair, unbiased decisions based on facts.
- 4) We try to fix the problem and tell you the outcome in clear words.
- 5) We use what we learn to make our services better.

Fair process

- You can tell us your side of the story and what you want.
- We will be respectful, listen and not take sides.
- We will make decisions based on evidence, not assumptions.
- We will explain our decision and offer a chance to respond.

If the complaint is about serious safety issues

- If there is harm, abuse, neglect, serious injury, unlawful contact or unauthorised restrictive practice, we will use our Incident Management Policy.
- We will meet all reporting rules (NDIS, DFFH/CIMS, TAC) when required.

If you want to complain to someone else

We can help you complain to other people

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:
1800 035 544
<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints>
- TAC (Transport Accident Commission):
1800 332 556
complaints@tac.vic.gov.au
- DFFH (Vic):
1300 884 706
feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au
- Commission for Children and Young People (Vic):
1300 782 978 | contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

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Complaints and Feedback Policy



- Victorian Disability Services Commissioner:
1800 677 342

Privacy complaints:

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC):
1300 363 992
www.oaic.gov.au

Your privacy

- We keep your information private and secure.
- Only people who need to will see your information.
- You can complain anonymously if you wish.

Records and how long we keep them

- We record your complaint in our Complaints Register.
- We note the issue, what we did, the outcome, and what we told you.
- We keep records for at least 7 years (or longer if the law says).
- We use de-identified information to check trends and improve.

Children and young people

- We use child-friendly and trauma-informed ways to listen.
- You can talk to independent people like CCYP or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing if you want.

TAC clients

- If you are a TAC client and there is a risk of harm, we will tell TAC as required.

If you are not happy with our response

- Tell us. We can look again or find another person to review.
- You can contact the NDIS Commission or other organisations listed above.

Contact CLRS

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Complaints and Feedback Policy

Phone: 03 5480 2388

Email: feedback@clrs.org.au

Address: 26A Percy St, Echuca

Post: PO Box 26, Echuca 3564

Website: www.clrs.org.au

This Easy Read policy uses simple words and symbols. You can ask for another format (Large Print, audio, or another language).

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