

## ESA Complaints and Feedback Policy

### Purpose

This policy outlines how people using Early Start Australia's (ESA's) services can provide feedback and complaints; and how feedback and complaints will be managed.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contracted staff (permanent, temporary and casual), and students.

### Principles

We embed principles of client-centredness, equity, procedural fairness and natural justice in relation to complaints and feedback. Clients and stakeholders are encouraged to exercise their right to provide feedback.

### Policy Statement

We value complaints and feedback as an important tool to improve the quality of our services. We want to gain a genuine understanding of the feedback provided. As consumers of our services, clients and stakeholders have a right to communicate their feedback without it impacting the service that they receive.

Our aim is to treat all feedback and complaints responsively, respectfully, and thoroughly.

To ensure that we recognise any trends, and to fortify our objectivity, internal committees such as the Clinical Services Committee, may review deidentified complaint and feedback data. Where possible, we will also involve clients and stakeholders in the review of deidentified complaint and feedback data, to provide a further client-centred approach.

Feedback, and the personal information of the person providing feedback, are dealt with in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 (as amended).

Our complaints handling and feedback processes are reviewed annually, with the aim of improving their delivery of effective outcomes.

### *Lodging a Complaint or Feedback*

Clients and stakeholders can provide feedback or a complaint by:

- Phone or in person at their ESA clinic
- Email to their ESA clinic's Practice Principal
- Using our online feedback and complaint form on our website

We can provide support to clients and stakeholders who need it, to lodge feedback or a complaint.

### *Working with the Person Providing Feedback*

#### *The Complainant*

When we receive feedback or a complaint, the clinic will work with the client or stakeholder who has provided the feedback, to understand the nature of their concern. Where appropriate, we may involve the complainant in the investigation and resolution process. Each complaint will be addressed in an objective and unbiased manner.

Complainants will be treated respectfully and kept advised of the progress of their complaint throughout the resolution process.



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Where appropriate, clients and families can be supported through the feedback and complaints process and provided with information about accessing advocacy services.

### *The Person Providing Positive Feedback*

When we receive positive feedback, this will be shared with the person who is the subject of the positive feedback. Where appropriate, this may also be shared with the person's Manager(s). The person providing positive feedback will be treated respectfully throughout the process.

### *Escalating and Reporting Complaints*

Complainants may escalate their complaint should they be dissatisfied with the response from us, or should they choose in any case to do so. There may also be a requirement for us to proactively report on complaints externally. Appropriate external complaints handling bodies include:

All States and Territories	NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission 1800 035 544 Online: <a href="https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF">https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF</a>
WA	Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) (08) 6551 7600 1800 813 583 Online: <a href="https://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au/Complaints/Complaint-Form">https://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au/Complaints/Complaint-Form</a>
SA	Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (08) 8226 8666 1800 232 007 Online: <a href="https://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/making-a-complaint/raise-a-complaint-with-hcsc/">https://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/making-a-complaint/raise-a-complaint-with-hcsc/</a>
Victoria	Victorian Disability Services Commissioner 1800 677 342 Online: <a href="https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint/how-to-make-a-complaint/">https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint/how-to-make-a-complaint/</a>
NSW	Ombudsman New South Wales Online: <a href="https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint">https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint</a>
Queensland	Ombudsman Queensland 1800 068 908 Online: <a href="https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/makecomplaint">https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/makecomplaint</a>
Northern Territory	Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner 1800 004 474 Online: <a href="https://www.hcsc.nt.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-online/">https://www.hcsc.nt.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-online/</a>
ACT	Human Rights Commission: Online: <a href="https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/">https://hrc.act.gov.au/complaints/</a>

### *Staff Training*

All our staff receive training in receiving feedback and complaints from our clients and stakeholders. This is part of the induction process and ongoing annual training and professional development.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### *Practice Principal*

- In most instances, manages the complaint and investigates the complaint (if required).
- Must keep all relevant staff and the complainant informed of the outcome, response and any actions.



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### The Corporate Team

- Provide support and oversight to the investigator in managing a complaint if required.
- Review any processes, documents or complete audits if required as part of the complaints process and continuous improvement.
- Identify local, regional or organisational trends or opportunities for improvement.

### Associated Documents

Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality Policy

ESA Complaints Form (available on our website)

ESA Complaints and Feedback Information Sheet

Our complaint system meets:

- National Standards for Disability Services (Standard 4: Feedback and Complaints);
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers
- Commonwealth NDIS Act (2013)
- Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988) (as amended)
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Document Control

<b>Document Name</b>	ESA Complaints and Feedback Policy <i>Tier 1 document – for circulation to Board</i>		
<b>Document Owner</b>	CEO	<b>Version</b>	5
<b>Created</b>	National Operations Manager (25 September 2018)	<b>Last Reviewed/ Modified</b>	CEO and Chair (March 2021)
<b>Authorised</b>	Board (March 2021)	<b>Review Due</b>	Annual (March 2022)
<b>Published Location</b>	ESA Website; Staff Intranet		

