

PROCEDURE

Complaints, Feedback and Compliments

1. PURPOSE

This procedure outlines how EPIC Support Services manages complaints and feedback and provides resolutions in order to maintain sound relationships with participants, their families/carers/guardians or other representatives and stakeholders, as well as providing ongoing service delivery improvement,

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers, students and contractors of EPIC Support Services, all participants, their families/carers/guardians or other representatives, visitors, supporters, sponsors, contractors and any other EPIC Support Services stakeholder.

Complaints and feedback made/given by carers in relation to Epic Support Services' services that have impacted on them and their role as carer must be dealt with under the provisions of this procedure.

This procedure does not cover grievances by employees about the employee relationship with EPIC Support Services. For such matters, refer to the Grievances Procedure.

3. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

All employees of EPIC Support Services must use all relevant opportunities to welcome and encourage feedback, and manage any feedback received in accordance with this procedure.

Opportunities to provide/receive feedback

A person wishing to provide feedback directly to EPIC Support Services may do so in writing or in person using the following avenues:

- Via the EPIC Support Services website: www.epicss.com.au
- Via e-mail: feedback@epicss.com.au
- Via post to: EPIC Support Services, PO Box 760 Belmont Victoria 3216
- In person to any EPIC Support Services employee or volunteer, either face to face or by phone

Participants may also lodge a complaint about their service directly to the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) asks that participants funded through them provide feedback by contacting their local NDIA office, emailing feedback@ndis.gov.au, calling 1800 800 110, or completing an online complaint form.

Promoting and encouraging feedback

On commencement of their service, and during the annual individual plan review, all participants will be provided information about all methods for providing feedback and how feedback is handled by EPIC Support Services.

During staff orientation, induction and ongoing supervision, it is essential that all supervisors make employees aware that they are required to encourage and promote regular feedback opportunities from participants and other stakeholders.

Regular communications via EPIC Support Services website and social media must promote Epic Support Services' policy to welcome and act upon feedback received and provide information on how feedback can be provided.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Persons providing feedback to EPIC Support Services may do so anonymously. All complaints are dealt with confidentiality on a need to know basis within EPIC Support Services.

How to deal with feedback received Receiving verbal feedback

Employees must demonstrate a positive manner and be receptive to all compliments, complaints and ideas made to them.

All employees must:

- Listen carefully and make notes during the conversation (where possible) or immediately following the end of the conversation, and
 - Confirm the details by repeating back the information and gain agreement from the person providing the feedback.
 - If required, explain what action will be taken and how long this will take (if known).
 - If there is an issue that needs to be resolved, agree on a solution and if possible resolve the issue at this stage adhering to Epic Support Services' policies and procedures, and taking into account duty of care obligations.

Support workers must:

- Find the first opportunity to discuss the feedback received with their supervisor. If the complaint is recorded on a Complaints and Feedback Form, the supervisor must then enter the feedback details and upload the completed form into the EPIC Support Services complaints database file.

Employees that do not have access to the EPIC Support Services database, must record feedback onto the Complaints and Feedback Form and forward to their manager and discuss if necessary.

The manager receiving the complaint and feedback form must:

- Review the feedback provided and discuss with the person who received it if necessary.
- Follow up on the feedback and if there is a matter to resolve, follow this up until it is resolved and all parties are satisfied.

Receiving written feedback

Feedback received in **writing** must be:

- Forwarded directly to the manager of the area to which the feedback pertains in a timely fashion even if the comments are not initially directed to that person.
- Follow through with any agreed actions and solutions immediately if required.
- Upload into Complaints database file by the manager by close of business on the day it was received. If relating to a participant, notes must be added to the Participant's file in the Participant Management database (PMD) and a copy of the complaint uploaded to their file.

For complaints, the manager must:

- Review the complaint and discuss with the relevant executive director, director and/or others involved as appropriate.
- Determine any action that is required. Where it is felt that the complaint or concern has legal, media or political implications, the CEO must be alerted immediately.

Then **EITHER**

- Within five working days of the complaint being received, respond in writing to the person who made the complaint, explaining what action will be taken and how long this will take.
- Update the details in PMD if required and attach any written response in PMD.

OR

- Make personal contact by telephone with the person, explaining what action will be taken and how long this will take.

- Update the details in PMD as described above if required and make a record of what was discussed during the telephone conversation.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaint:

Any expression of dissatisfaction made to EPIC Support Services, related to its products, services or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Supervisor:

The position to whom the employee reports directly (i.e. regional area supervisor, coordinator, manager, general manager, CEO).

Participant:

For the purposes of this procedure, the term participant also includes their families, carers or other representatives such as advocates or legal guardians.

Employees:

For the purposes of this procedure, the term employees also includes volunteers, students and contractors.

Severity of the complaint or concern

In the event the nature of feedback is very serious, it must be reported to a manager immediately. For example, it may relate to alleged abuse and/or neglect of participants, misappropriation of money, drug use or other matters which have the potential to hurt participants or employees if immediate action is not taken. The employee receiving such a complaint must use their judgement as to whether they should immediately talk to or phone their manager to deal with the situation.

The Participant Incident Reporting Procedure must also be followed if the nature of the feedback falls within the definition of a participant incident.

Some complaints or concerns have legal, media or political implications. If this is the case the CEO must be alerted immediately.

Complaints about specific employees

Complaints about specific employees must be dealt with in the same manner as all other complaints and the Discipline and Termination Procedure followed should this be appropriate.

Where the matter is resolved immediately

Where complaints are resolved immediately this must be recorded in the appropriate section of the feedback in PMD.

Where a matter is not resolved immediately

Where the matter is not resolved immediately, the manager must:

- Identify all the issues.
- Have all the facts at their disposal.
- Determine the action that is required adhering to Epic Support Services' policies and procedures and taking into account duty of care obligations.
- Write an action plan to address the issue.
- Determine whether the severity of the complaint necessitates the CEO being advised.
- Advise the complainant of progress within **7 days**.

Following up Complaints and Feedback

At times the feedback may involve input and support from others at EPIC Support Services. The manager receiving the feedback may involve

The Health and Safety Officer

- For advice, suggestions and solutions (this can include the feedback being tabled for discussion at the next Occupational Health and Safety meeting). Outcomes for the discussion are provided to the referring manager, executive director or director to follow up.

Another manager

- When the feedback is redirected to the more appropriate manager, that person will follow this procedure as though they had received it initially.

Where a matter remains unresolved for one month

- Where a matter remains unresolved for one month the manager must advise the relevant executive director or director of the matter and the progress towards resolution.

Referral to the CEO

- At any stage in the process towards resolution of a complaint or concern, the person may contact the CEO with their complaint or concern. The CEO will decide whether to personally deal with the matter or refer it back to the General Manager.

Referral to the Board

- The CEO may decide, at any time, to refer the matter to the Company Board.

Referral to the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner

- The CEO may decide, at any time, to refer the matter to the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner (VDSC). People are always advised to first try to resolve their complaint directly with EPIC Support Services. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily the complaint can be referred to the VDSC for mediation.

Service improvement

Managers must ensure that any service improvement outcomes as a result of feedback are implemented and incorporated into relevant procedures if required.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that they remain informed regarding EPIC Support Services procedures which impact upon their duties, and to work within them.

6. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

All EPIC Support Services employees are encouraged to provide feedback on this procedure to their supervisor, to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to reflect the actual manner in which activities are undertaken.

| RELATED DOCUMENTS |
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| Complaints, Feedback and Compliments Policy and Procedure |
| Participation and Inclusion Policy and Procedure |
| Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure |
| Safeguarding for Participants |
| Critical Incident Report Form |

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| Participant Services Governance Policy and Procedure |
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| Code of Conduct |
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| Discipline and Termination Procedure |
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| Duty of Care |
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| Responding to Abuse and Neglect of a Participant Procedure |
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| Complaints, Feedback and Compliments Form |
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| RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS |
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| Disability Services Act 2006 (Vic) |
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| RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS |
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| National Standards for Disability Services |
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