

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Section 2: Client Services	
Policy number: 2.6	Authorised by: Management Committee
Date adopted: 29 th July 2013	Date last reviewed: June 2024 Next review Due: June 2028
Related Standards	
Human Services Quality Standards Standard 4: Safety, Wellbeing and Rights Standard 5: Feedback, Complaints and Appeals	National Accreditation Scheme Standards Standard 17 – Assessing client satisfaction and managing complaints

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear process whereby stakeholders including clients, their families and friends, client advocates and members of the community may make a complaint about matters related to the Northside Connect Inc (NCI).

Policy statement

NCI acknowledges that in many cases, demonstrated dissatisfaction will be a concern which the person wishes to give feedback on, rather than a complaint. A concern indicates a level of anxiety or uneasiness in regard to a person or service of the Organisation.

A concern becomes a complaint when a stakeholder:

1. Indicates they wish to pursue the matter through the formal complaints process; or
2. The matter is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the concerned person and that person indicates they wish to pursue the matter further.

NCI will endeavour to resolve all concerns or complaints quickly, in a confidential manner, with regard to the rights of all parties considering the Qld Human Right Act 2019 and without retribution.

Procedures

The Complaints Policy is to be placed on the Organisation’s website and to be affixed in the public foyer are of the Centre.

Staff or members of the Management committee when approached with a concern or query should assist that person in line with their roles and responsibilities, or refer them to an appropriate person.

A complaint can be made directly by a stakeholder and may be done in person, over the phone or in writing via email or post.

NCI must respond to any formal complaint within 30 days of the complaint being made.

Where staff members have a complaint or concern, this should be dealt with in line with NCI’s Staff Grievance Procedure.



A complaint against NCI may be made regarding any of the following:

- Any problem they may be having with the service
- Any problem concerning an employee, student or volunteer working with the service
- Any problem relating to a decision made by the service
- Any problem with an activity or event organised by the service

All complaints will be documented and given to the Coordinator for review and further action if required. If considered serious in nature, the Executive of the Management Committee will be notified of the complaint, provided with a copy and any action taken. The person concerned must be informed that this will occur and given an assurance that their complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner, with regard to the rights of all parties and without retribution. The exception to this is when the other party/ies wish to obtain legal or other expert advice or assistance.

In some circumstances NCI may decide not to investigate a complaint made. The circumstances under which the organisation may choose not to take action in respect of a complaint include:

1. Where the matter is currently being dealt with by another body i.e. a court or Government agency;
2. Where the matter has already been dealt with by another body i.e. a court or Government agency;
3. Where the matter occurred more than 12 months prior or otherwise making investigation impractical; or
4. Where the matter has been previously dealt with and the organisation has decided that no further action will be taken.
5. Where the matter is considered trivial, malicious or vexatious.

If a decision to take no action is made by staff or the Management Committee the complainant will be informed of this and the reasons why within 30 days of making the complaint. The steps to making a complaint by a client, stakeholder or community member are as follows:

1. Discussion of the complaint with a staff member or a representative of NCI. Most concerns and complaints can be addressed informally and a satisfactory solution reached easily and quickly.

Where a concern cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of the person concerned through an informal process, the person is to be made aware of NCI's formal complaints process, and assistance to access appropriate documents provided.

2. If the person wishes to pursue the matter through the formal complaints process, they can do so, preferably in writing either via post or email to the Coordinator or President of the Management Committee. The matter can then be addressed either through written correspondence or a formal meeting with the Coordinator or President to discuss their complaint. A support person or advocate may be involved at the person's request. The discussions and any outcomes from this meeting will be documented with a copy sent to the person within five (5) working days.
3. Addressing it to the Executive of the Management Committee. If the complaint is about the Coordinator decision making and/or behavior, the person should address this with the Management Committee. The person should mark their correspondence "**Confidential**" and addressed to the

**President of the Management Committee,
Northside Connect Inc
P.O. Box 386, Nundah 4012**

4. External appeal – if the person is dissatisfied with the outcomes of the internal process, or if they have grievances that they feel unable to express to NCSGI's staff or Management Committee, then they have right to express these with an external party. Concerns can be addressed to the following

BNCLS

Private and Confidential
State Program Manager
Legal Aid Queensland
Community Legal Service Program
GPO BOX 2449
Brisbane 4000

NNC

Private and Confidential
CSO for Northside Connect Inc
Department of Communities
PO Box 3022
South Brisbane Qld 4101

Legal Services

While the general NCI policy is that there must be no reprisal or withdrawal of service with respect to any complaint, the unique nature of the lawyer-client relationship of confidence means that it may be improper and/or inappropriate for the BNCLS to continue to provide service either through a particular individual or at all to a client. This must be considered on a case by case basis and where the BNCLS does not provide further service, referrals to other Community Legal Centres is to be provided.