

## **COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE HANDLING**

### **Extract from *youthconnections.com.au* Policy & Procedures**

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#### **2.4 Complaints Handling**

##### **Internal**

*youthconnections.com.au* recognises that complaints, grievances and disputes may occur within an organisation. It is also recognised that external bodies may need avenues to raise complaints with *Youthconnections.com.au*. Complaints will be handled fairly and efficiently in order to promote high *youthconnections.com.au* standards and to maintain a positive work environment.

##### **General principles**

All complaints and disputes will be addressed promptly and within the guiding principles of:

- transparency
- fairness
- respect
- accountability

All clients and staff of *youthconnections.com.au* are expected to work cooperatively as a team, to acknowledge any dispute at an early stage, and to resolve any dispute in the most constructive manner possible.

Any conflict of interest arising from a dispute will be declared and all steps will be taken to ensure persons working to resolve a dispute are impartial. Clients and staff are expected to maintain confidentiality in relation to complaints and disputes.

#### **2.5 Complaints involving staff**

The Board delegates responsibility for resolving complaints or disputes involving staff members to the Manager, in their capacity as manager of staff.

Where a staff member makes a complaint concerning another staff member, this will be dealt with in accordance with the grievance procedure set out in Section 3 – Human Resource Management.

Where a member or external agency makes a complaint against a *youthconnections.com.au* staff member, the Manager will:

- notify the employee about whom a complaint is being made and the nature of the complaint;
- investigate the complaint and provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond to any issues raised;

- attempt to mediate the dispute (if appropriate) and/or attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the outside party;
- take any other action necessary to resolve the issue.
- Any disciplinary action against a staff member arising from a complaint will be taken in accordance with the procedures contained Section 3 Human Resource Management and in the enterprise agreement.

## **2.6 Complaints involving Clients and Board Members**

Complaints against a client or Board member should be referred to the Chairperson. The Chairperson, or an approved delegate, will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant.

The Chairperson or delegate will advise the person about whom a complaint is being made of the notification and the nature of the complaint. Where the Chairperson is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be referred to another Executive Member of the Board.

If the matter remains unresolved, the Chairperson or notified Board Member will raise the matter at the next Board Meeting following notification. Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, the Board may:

- deal with the matter at this Board Meeting by determining appropriate action to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party; or
- defer the matter to a special meeting of the Board or to a Sub Committee of the Board.

Under the Constitution, the Board has powers to suspend or terminate the membership of any one who wilfully 'refuses or neglects to comply' with the provisions of the Constitution, or who is 'guilty of conduct prejudicial to the interests' of *youthconnections.com.au*. Such action must be taken in accordance with the process described in the Constitution, which provide for proper notice and rights of appeal.

## **2.7 Complaints or Disputes Involving the Manager**

Complaints or disputes involving the Manager should be referred to the Chairperson. The procedural format for complaints involving the Manager is the same as for complaints involving other staff excepting it is the Chairperson facilitating resolution.

## **2.16 *youthconnections.com.au* External Complaints and Feedback Policy Standard for Managing Complaints**

*youthconnections.com.au* offers service users, stakeholders and the public the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences with *youthconnections.com.au*. We value this feedback and aim to manage complaints in a prompt, fair, transparent and consistent way.

## **2.17 *youthconnections.com.au* Complaints and Feedback Policy – Principles**

Any person or organisation using *youthconnections.com.au* services or affected by its operations has the right to complain.

Complaints procedures and a commitment to consider all complaints are simple and easy to use and are effectively promoted, so that all people using *youthconnections.com.au* services have the opportunity to make a complaint if they wish to do so.

Service users, stakeholders and members are entitled to be heard and have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

*youthconnections.com.au* recognises that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant and must be taken seriously. Resolving complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant is the goal of the complaints policy process.

Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and parties to the complaint will be kept informed of progress of the complaint. *youthconnections.com.au* procedures will reflect principles of natural justice.

Feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in *youthconnections.com.au* reviews and follow up. Board members, staff, volunteers, service users and students are aware of *youthconnections.com.au* procedures for managing client feedback and complaints.

*youthconnections.com.au* takes a pro-active approach, through its communications strategy to ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures. In particular the service user complaints policy brochure is available on the *youthconnections.com.au* website.

## **2.18 Complaints Handling Procedure**

All Board members, staff, volunteers, service users and students are given information about the complaints procedure as part of their induction.

The *youthconnections.com.au* Service Commitment brochure informs service users, stakeholders and members of:

- How to make a complaint to *youthconnections.com.au*
- Who to complain to
- How *youthconnections.com.au* will deal with the complaint – complaints process and timelines
- Rights to a support person and interpreter
- How to make a complaint to an external body including contact details

## **2.19 Complaints Initiation Process**

Service users, staff stakeholders, volunteers and students may make a complaint in writing or verbally to:

- The staff member they were dealing with at the time, or
- The supervisor of that worker,
- The Manager, or
- An outside body

If the complaint is about the Manager, or a Board member, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Chairperson of the *youthconnections.com.au* Board. A special email account has been set up to receive such complaints. The address is [maggie@youthconnections.com.au](mailto:maggie@youthconnections.com.au) . Relevant items are then forwarded to the Chairperson for action.

## **2.20 How *youthconnections.com.au* Deals with Complaints**

A staff member (the “complaint handler”) will look at the complaint within seven days of the complaint being received. They may contact the person for more information.

The staff member investigating the complaint will decide how to respond to the complaint and make sure action is taken.

A letter will be sent to the person within 14 days of the complaint being received explaining what is being done to investigate and resolve their complaint. If the complaint has not been resolved by this stage the person will be asked to formalise their complaint in writing (if this has not already been done).

*youthconnections.com.au* aims to investigate and resolve all complaints within a further 28 days of receipt of the formalised written complaint. If this time frame cannot be met, the person will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution. All complaints must be dealt with:

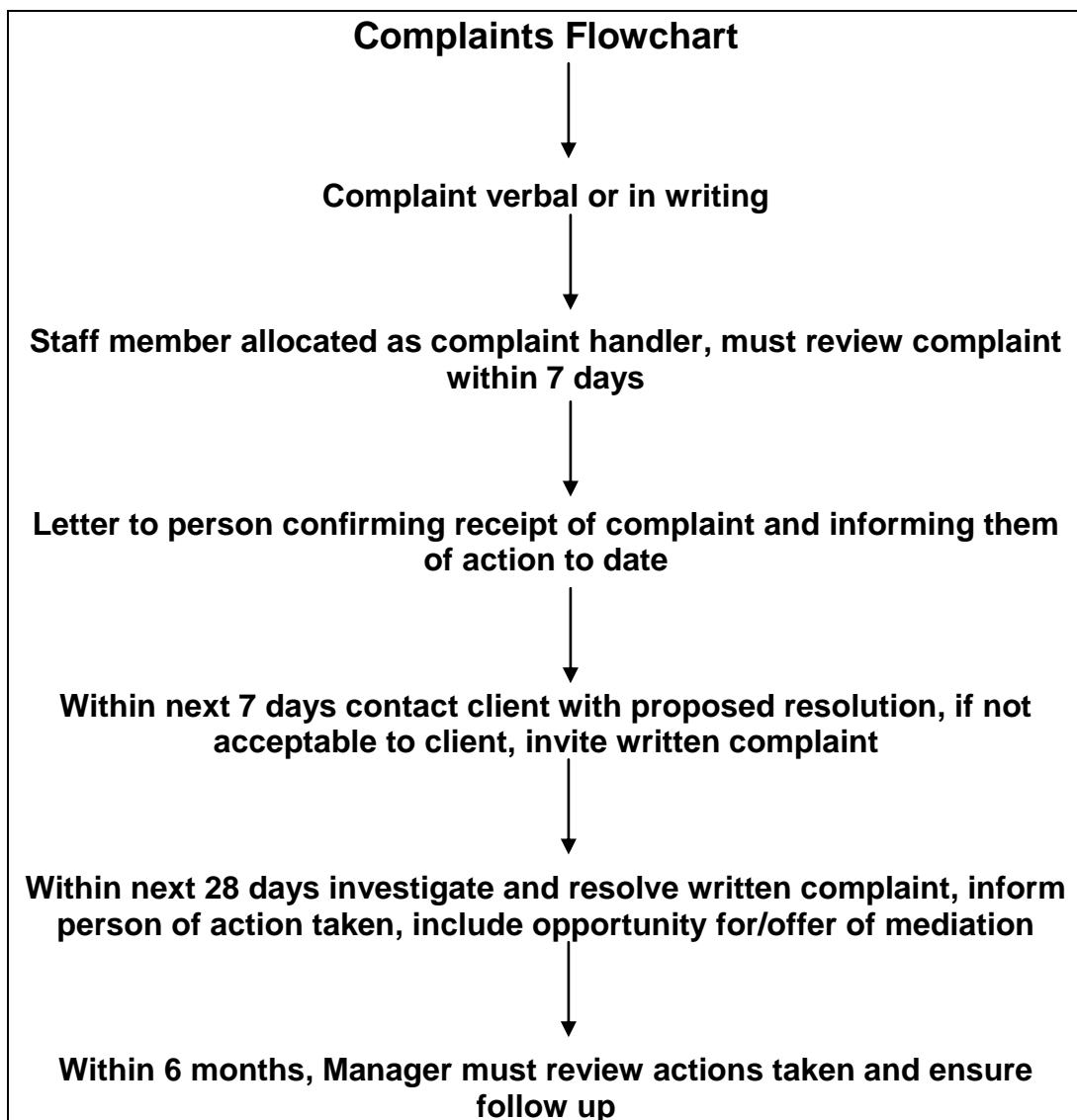
- Seriously
- Quickly

- Confidentially; and
- Without stopping the persons right to use *youthconnections.com.au* services

Service users, volunteers, stakeholder and students have the right to access a support person at all stages of the complaints resolution process.

Copies of all complaints and details of actions taken are centrally filed in the Complaints File, held in the Managers office. This file is confidential.

Within six months of the complaint being resolved, the Manager must review the actions taken to ensure adequate follow up.



## **Brochure Content**

### **Our Commitment**

*youthconnections.com.au* wants to give you the best quality service possible. If you have found our service helpful or have any ideas on how something can be done better, please let us know. We also want to know if you are not happy or have concerns about any part of our service.

### **Can I comment on anything?**

**Yes!** You do have the right to express your comments about any part of any service at *youthconnections.com.au*. A comment may be:

- a compliment
- a suggestion
- an idea
- a fear
- a concern
- a complaint

If you have a complaint read this brochure about what you can do.

***Making a complaint can be difficult, so if you do have a complaint about Youthconnections.com.au this is a guide to help you...***

### **What do I do?**

1. First it is best to talk to the person concerned. If you do not feel comfortable about this, you can speak or write to their supervisor.
2. If the complaint is about a staff member, please contact the Manager on 4322 8600
3. If the complaint is about the Manager, or member of the *youthconnections.com.au* Board please contact the Chairperson of the *youthconnections.com.au* Board by sending an email to: [maggie@youthconnections.com.au](mailto:maggie@youthconnections.com.au)

### **What happens after that?**

Your complaint will be recorded in a separate file so that the problem can be dealt with sensitively and quickly.

You will receive a letter within 14 days of making your complaint. This letter should:

- restate your comments to ensure *youthconnections.com.au* understands your complaint.
- give the name of the person who is managing your complaint and how they may be contacted.

- state the time and the steps the worker will take to deal with your concerns.

***What happens after I get my letter?***

Once you have received your letter the *youthconnections.com.au* worker handling your complaint will contact you to talk about what you want to do and the next steps.

If we have not been able to resolve the complaint within the 14 days we will ask you to formalise the complaint in a letter (if you have not already done so). *youthconnections.com.au* aims to investigate and resolve all complaints within a further 28 days of receipt of the written complaint. If this is not possible we will write to you and explain why.

All complaints will be dealt with:

- Seriously
- Quickly
- Confidentially; and
- Without stopping your right to use *youthconnections.com.au* services

***Can I have someone to help me?***

**Yes!** It is OK to have a friend or person you trust to help you in any of your dealings with *youthconnections.com.au*. This person can help you put your comments in writing, be with you when you put forward your comments or attend any meetings.

***What if I need an interpreter?***

*youthconnections.com.au* will assist you if you need an interpreter. There will be no cost to you for this service.