

## Feedback and Complaints Policy

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## Policy Context

<b>Relevant service standards:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS Practice Standards: Person Centred Supports</li> <li>• NDIS Practice Standards: Risk Management</li> <li>• NDIS Practice Standards: Feedback and Complaints Management</li> </ul>	<b>Legislation/other requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS Act 2013</li> <li>• NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018</li> <li>• Disability Act 2006</li> <li>• United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986</li> <li>• Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001</li> </ul>
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### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how participants and other stakeholders are able to provide feedback and make complaints about any aspect of Distinctive Options and the process that will be taken to address or respond.

### Scope

This policy applies to the Board of Directors, all staff, contractors, students, volunteers, funding bodies, stakeholders and visitors of Distinctive Options. It also applies to participants and other stakeholders of Distinctive Options.

### Policy Statement

Distinctive Options values complaints from people with a disability, families, carers, advocates, service providers and regulators. Complaints are an important source of information and are used to improve our services whenever possible. Distinctive Options promotes an environment where participants and other stakeholders are free to provide both positive and negative feedback without fear or constraint, which will be effectively handled and seen as opportunities for Distinctive Options to continuously improve. No person will be treated with adverse consequences or loss of service due to making a complaint. Distinctive Options encourages complainants to source independent information, support, advocacy, advice and representation if they so wish.

Distinctive Options will provide written and visual information to all participants on their rights and how to make a complaint or to appeal a decision if they believe their rights have been breached or compromised. Further, Distinctive Options will ensure this process is undertaken in a timely and transparent manner. Distinctive Options will ensure all participants are supported in their efforts to lodge a complaint or appeal through direct assistance by Distinctive Options staff, clear simple written instructions and information on how to access advocacy organisations.

Complaints identify risks to people with a disability, visitors and staff. They help Distinctive Options to meet its occupational health and safety obligations. We aim to resolve all complaints at the lowest level and as quickly as possible, applying principles of subsidiarity.

### Policy Details

Distinctive Options promotes opportunities for participants to provide feedback, which is used to inform individual and organisational service reviews and improvement.

Accessible information is provided to all participants about:

- providing feedback,
- making complaints, and

- appeals and allegations processes.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Feedback

Distinctive Options will ensure that:

- regular feedback is sought and used to inform participant and organisational service reviews and improvement,
- independent information, support, advice and representation is accessible to ensure participants are able to provide feedback,
- participants will be supported to communicate their feedback in a manner which best suits their preferred communication style/method,
- mechanisms are in place to ensure that participants are satisfied with the management of feedback, and
- outcomes of participant feedback are provided to participants clearly.

Participants will be supported to complete a Participant Feedback Record to share their feedback. If a staff member feels that the feedback being provided is actually a complaint and that the complaint cannot be immediately addressed, they should address the feedback according to the Complaints Management and Response.

## Complaints

Distinctive Options will ensure that:

- independent information, support, advice and representation is accessible, clearly communicated and encouraged to ensure participants are able to make a complaint;
- participants understand how to access independent support and advice when making a complaint;
- participants can make a complaint/appeal or resolve a dispute without fear of adverse consequences;
- complaints, disputes and appeals are treated seriously and resolved as quickly as possible and at the lowest level possible;
- complaints are resolved in collaboration with the participant, and/or if applicable – family, friends, carers or advocates in a proactive and timely manner;
- outcomes of complaints, appeals and disputes are provided to participants clearly and within appropriate timeframes;
- mechanisms are in place to ensure that participants are satisfied with the management of complaints, appeals and disputes processes;
- each complaint, appeal or dispute will be handled in line with the Rights and Empowerment Policy and with a focus on privacy and confidentiality;
- complaints, disputes and appeals are managed in accordance with the Complaints Management and Response; and
- information is made available in accessible formats to all participants about external complaints mechanisms and support, including:
  - the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commissioner, and
  - local advocacy agencies.

## Procedures

The following procedures are related to this policy:

- Complaints Management and Response
- Participant Induction