

1 PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

SYC recognises that the people that we support have a right to question and influence decisions made and services provided by us.

SYC values complaints, compliments, feedback and appeals as an opportunity to learn and improve on the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of its services and encourages the people we support to communicate with us through this process or by any other means.

SYC takes all complaints, compliments, feedback and appeals seriously and manages them in a timely, transparent, and meaningful way.

Complaints, compliments, feedback and appeals may be made by the person we support or who is affected by our services, their family, friends, carer or a nominated advocate with permission to speak on their behalf, by a local organisation or funding partner with which we work, our employees, volunteers or a member of the public.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1.1 SYC's complaints management is governed by the following principles:-

- a. complaints are best handled promptly and as close to the source as possible,
- b. complaints will be handled objectively and confidentially, and the person making the complaint will not suffer any reprisals for making a complaint,
- c. persons making a complaint will be treated with respect and will be provided with clear explanations of SYC's decisions and actions taken where this is appropriate or required,
- d. complaints will, wherever relevant, inform the continual improvement of SYC's policies, procedures and practices,
- e. all SYC participants are informed of their right to make a complaint, dispute or appeal a decision SYC has made to a relevant external agency in the first instance.

2.1.2 SYC makes all efforts to ensure that the complaints process is impartial, transparent and accountable and adheres to procedural fairness.

3 POLICY DETAILS

3.1 How complaints may be made

3.1.1 SYC has made available dedicated participant mechanisms designed to obtain meaningful participant feedback, including:-

- a. direct reference to an on-site SYC Manager,
- b. a dedicated "Feedback" email address (feedback@syc.net.au),
- c. feedback facilities on SYC's website www.syc.net.au,
- d. in writing addressed to SYC Quality, Reply Paid 85718, PO Box 4199, Norwood, SA 5067,
- e. "Feedback and Complaints" form, which is provided to people we support at all SYC operational sites,
- f. via telephone,

- g. identifying on behalf of participants the relevant external agencies available for complaints associated with SYC services.

3.2 How we will handle complaints

- 3.2.1 SYC supports the participants' right to make a complaint to a relevant external agency in the first instance without prejudice.
- 3.2.2 SYC encourages the resolution of minor complaints or appeals at the local level where the service is delivered.
- 3.2.3 If the complaint or appeal cannot be resolved locally, it may be escalated through Line Managers to SYC's central complaints management system.
- 3.2.4 Complex complaints or appeals that require formal acknowledgement, multifaceted assessment and investigation, or corrective action, such as a change in our practice, training, or the involvement of a regulatory body, will be reviewed through SYC's central complaints management system.
- 3.2.5 If a complaint or appeal is referred to a regulatory body or external agency and the regulatory body or agency commences investigating or is investigating the complaint, SYC will assist the body/agency with their investigation if required but may cease to continue any other internal actions pending finalisation of the body/agency's investigation.

3.3 Responding to a Complaint

- 3.3.1 Minor complaints which are resolved at local levels, to the expressed satisfaction of the person making the complaint, will not be formally responded to by SYC.
- 3.3.2 A person making a complaint will be given the opportunity to specifically request a response from SYC and will be contacted where this has been requested. Contact details such as an email address, street address or telephone number must be provided by the person.
- 3.3.3 Once a complaint has been received, SYC will undertake an initial review of the complaint.
- 3.3.4 Where requested, SYC will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint received by email, letter or telephone as soon as possible and within 2 working days:
 - a. by return email, to the email address provided at the time of the complaint,
 - b. by letter, to a street address provided at the time of the complaint, if this has been requested,
 - c. by telephone, to a telephone number provided at the time of the complaint, if this has been requested.
- 3.3.5 SYC will cooperate fully with any external agency to whom a complaint has been made by an SYC participant relating to an SYC service.
- 3.3.6 SYC aims to resolve all complaints as soon as practicable and within 10 working days; however, this period may be lengthened if the complaint is complex and the investigating officer needs to gather information.

- 3.3.7 SYC may need to contact the person making the complaint to clarify details or request further information or documentation.
- 3.3.8 If there is a requirement for SYC to meet with the complainant or any other person in order to investigate or resolve the complaint, any person that is involved in the complaint may be accompanied and assisted by a third party at any relevant meeting.
- 3.3.9 If a complaint is not resolved within 10 days, the person making the complaint will be updated on the progress of the investigation of their complaint, and at 10 day intervals if the complaint is complex, until the complaint is resolved.
- 3.3.10 If a complaint has been referred to a regulatory body or external agency, SYC will only provide responses regarding the investigation or resolution of the complaint to the regulatory body or external agency even if the identity and contact details of the complainant is known to SYC, unless otherwise requested by the complainant or agency.

3.4 Closing a Complaint

- 3.4.1 Complaints are considered resolved when:
 - a. the person making the complaint expresses satisfaction with the resolution provided by SYC,
 - b. SYC determines that all avenues available to it to resolve the issue have been exhausted,
 - c. an external agency considers the complaint to be resolved.
- 3.4.2 Where required by a regulatory body or external agency, SYC will ensure that the complainant or appellant is given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint and any appeals, including details of the reasons for the outcome.
- 3.4.3 In most other cases SYC will advise the complainant of the outcome of the complaint:
 - a. by electronic mail (email), if this is the most appropriate means of communication,
 - b. by face-to-face communication with a Line Manager at the Site where the service has been delivered.
- 3.4.4 If the person making the complaint believes that SYC has not resolved the complaint to their satisfaction, they may ask to have the decision reviewed. This review should occur by a suitable person with relevant authority who was not responsible for the original determination of the complaint.
- 3.4.5 If the person making the complaint is still not satisfied or feels that they can't discuss the complaint further with SYC, we will assist the person in referring their complaint to a regulatory authority or external agency. SYC will provide the complainant with the contact details of the relevant regulatory authority applicable to the service provided.

3.5 Confidentiality

- 3.5.1 SYC respects the right of participants, employees, stakeholders and members of the public to remain anonymous when making a complaint or providing feedback.
- 3.5.2 SYC cannot, and will not, acknowledge, respond to, or provide details of any outcome to a complaint made anonymously, even if SYC is aware, or becomes aware, of the identity of the complainant as a result of any investigation, contact with a regulatory body or external agency or other resolution process.
- 3.5.3 SYC will respect the confidentiality of a complainant and act in accordance with Privacy Law, Information Sharing Guidelines and Deed requirements.
- 3.5.4 In the event a response to the feedback/complaint is requested, only the parties directly involved in responding to and resolving the complaint will have access to the information supplied.

3.6 Recording and Reporting Feedback and Complaints Data

- 3.6.1 SYC maintains a record of all complaints and feedback received from participants, stakeholders, external agencies, employees, volunteers and members of the public.
- 3.6.2 Personal information will be recorded as part of the complaint in accordance with SYC's Privacy Policy and relevant privacy legislation.
- 3.6.3 A complainant has the right to access their personal information held by SYC, including that related to complaints, according to the "Access and correction" provisions of SYC's Privacy Policy.
- 3.6.4 Complaint data is reported to the IMS Committee on a regular basis and is retained by the organisation for at least 5 years.

3.7 Communication

- 3.7.1 The operation of SYC's complaint and feedback management system is included in the induction training of all SYC employees.
 - a. This Policy and the Procedure that implements this policy are communicated to employees through SYC's intranet and SYC's Service Portfolio communication systems, e.g. newsletters and management meetings.
- 3.7.2 This Policy is available on the SYC website, www.syc.net.au, to SYC participants and customers, volunteers, stakeholders, and members of the public.

3.8 Continual Improvement

- 3.8.1 SYC reviews its complaint and feedback handling system through systematic review of processes within its Integrated Management System framework.
- 3.8.2 SYC's complaint and feedback management process is an important element of the identification and implementation of continuous improvement.
- 3.8.3 Complaints and feedback are monitored by SYC management to identify trends or recurrent system problems.

3.8.4 Where appropriate, SYC will amend its policies, procedures and practices as a result of a complaint.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Executive	Accountable for the effective implementation of the policy within SYC, including its promotion throughout the organisation and to participants. They ensure employees managing complaints are resourced appropriately and supported in a timely manner.
IMS Committee	Responsible for ensuring the policy and procedures are visible and accessible to employees and participants. They are also responsible for ensuring complaint and feedback data is collected, analysed and used to identify opportunities for systematic service improvements.
Managers	Responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented within their teams and that complaints are handled with fairness and efficiency in accordance with this Policy.
All Employees	Complying with all applicable policies and procedures. Employees must treat participants with respect and assist participants in making complaints and providing feedback where appropriate.

5 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this document, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply.

Term	Definition
Complaint	expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding the provision of a service, a decision or action by SYC, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Appeal	expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding a decision made by the organisation. The decision made may be regarding an assessment decision or outcome.
Feedback	Information from participants regarding satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which is used as a basis for improvement and a measure of success.

6 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

In support of this Policy, the following documents apply:

6.1 Internal

- Privacy Policy
- Service Access Policy
- Feedback, Compliments, Complaints and Continual Improvement Procedure
- Records Management Procedure
- Monitoring the Integrated Management System
- Feedback and Complaints form

6.2 External

- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems - Requirements
- AS ISO 10002-2006: Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013 (Schedule 2 Internal Disputes)

7 APPLICABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROPERTIES

This Policy applies to all SYC employees.

Organisational compliance with this Policy will be determined through management review and internal audit.

Opportunities for Improvement in relation to this Policy or its implementation may be registered in Skytrust.

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