



Complaints and Feedback Management Policy

1. Purpose

First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN) offers a fair, accessible, responsive and efficient process for any stakeholder to provide formal or informal feedback, or to make a complaint related to any part of FPDN operations.

This policy defines the process and how it contributes to the continual improvement processes of FPDN.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff which includes any person carrying out work for FPDN as an employee, contractor and/or volunteer.

2. Policy Statements

2.1 Acknowledgement of feedback

Any feedback received will be acknowledged within five working days. Acknowledgement will help FPDN communicate with the client about what can be expected.

The acknowledgement will:

- Outline the process and give an estimate of how long resolution might take and who else will be involved;
- Provide details about who will be investigating the feedback or complaint and how to contact them;
- Advise the client that confidentiality will be maintained according to FPDN's Privacy Policy; and
- Seek involvement from the client in the resolution process.

2.2 Assessment

Feedback or complaints can be complex or simple depending on whether investigation is required to establish clarity around the issues involved. Simple complaints are often resolved through an apology.

All feedback and complaints will be assessed to:

- Clarify the issues presented by the client;
- Prioritise the issues;
- Determine if there are any safety or wellbeing issues for the customer or other stakeholder; and
- Ascertain if any legal representatives or advocates should be involved.

The assessment may show that client expectations are unachievable. If this is the case, FPDN will

discuss alternatives with the client and negotiate next steps.

All FPDN staff can resolve feedback or complaints assessed as simple. Complex issues are those that require investigation, where facts may be in dispute, there will be expenses incurred by FPDN, there are external bodies involved, the client impact is great, mandatory reporting is required or significant response from FPDN is required.

During assessment, clients will be asked to identify how they see the issue being resolved. Any additional information required to investigate the issue will be identified.

FPDN will at times act with impartiality, confidentiality, transparency and in a timely way. Information will only be shared with those who need to know and only where there is consent.

A record will be kept within the client file of any results coming from the assessment and investigation. Clients will be asked for any documentation they have that will help in the assessment and these will also be retained securely.

It is important during the assessment stage that customers are given the opportunity to present their point of view and to respond to any information provided by others. This all forms part of any assessment report.

2.3 FPDN response

Once FPDN has reached a decision regard the feedback or complaint it will be communicated clearly to the client utilising any supports required by the client in order to understand the decision.

This may be done by conversation with the client and representatives or a more formal response may be offered.

In all cases, FPDN will communicate with the client on what has happened and been decided following the feedback or complaint. If the client requests no further communication following the disclosure of their feedback, these wishes will be followed but FPDN may still choose to investigate and assess for their own continuous improvement processes.

2.4 Follow up

Once a resolution has been reached and stakeholders advised, FPDN will follow up, seeking information on whether the client is satisfied with the result and the process.

If the client is not happy with the end result, FPDN will consider any alternatives that may be available. This might include mediation.

2.5 Continual improvement

Complaints and feedback often help to uncover systemic issues. Assessment and investigation can lead to improved processes for FPDN.

It is important to be able to demonstrate the improvements achieved through client feedback. FPDN will track feedback and complaints received and any improvements made as a result.

2.6 Escalation

Where a client is not satisfied but also wishes to escalate the issue, FPDN will offer the following options for the client to proceed:

- The client can contact the FPDN Board by writing to Chairperson at PO Box 20048 World Square NSW 2002.

2.7 Resolution timeframe

It is often the case complaints will be acknowledged and resolved at the time of receipt. Where this is not possible because FPDN needs to investigate and consider the issues raised, FPDN will attempt

to resolve all complaints within thirty days.

2.8 Documenting

Any complaints received will be recorded in the FPDN complaints register. The register records details of the complaint along with information on any investigation that has taken place and outcomes.

Feedback options

Any stakeholder can provide feedback to FPDN through any access point that is available and suits the stakeholder. This can include email, social media, by phone or through the FPDN website.

Complaints can be received directly or through an external process such as an advocate. Regardless of how the feedback is received, this policy will apply.

2.9 Assistance to clients

Some clients will need assistance in order to record their feedback or complaint. FPDN will provide this assistance wherever possible and might include help relating to:

- Physical, mental, cognitive and sensory abilities
- Cultural practice
- Literacy and language skills

External assistance services may include:

- The National Relay Service (NRS) provides a free service to assist conversations with people who are deaf or have a speech or hearing impairment
- Advocacy services that can assist or represent a client to facilitate delivery of feedback or a complaint.

FPDN will provide information to clients on how to record their feedback or complaints and the assistance options available to them.

2.10 External complaints mechanisms

FPDN will support the use of external mechanisms in order to receive feedback or complaints from clients.

If clients are in New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria or Tasmania and have a concern about NDIS supports or services delivered by FPDN, a complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- [National Relay Service](#) and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a [complaint contact form](#).

The NDIS Commission can take complaints from anyone about:

- NDIS services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
 - NDIS services and supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard
 - how an NDIS provider has managed a complaint about services or supports provided to an NDIS participant
- For advocacy services, The Australian Government Department of Social Services provide a Disability Advocacy Finder Service which can be accessed through <https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/>

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* defines an independent advocate, in relation to a

person with disability, to mean a person who:

- is independent of the Agency, the Commission and any NDIS providers providing supports or services to the person with disability
- provides independent advocacy for the person with disability, to assist the person with disability to exercise choice and control and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them
- acts at the direction of the person with disability, reflecting the person with disability's expressed wishes, will, preferences and rights
- is free of relevant conflicts of interest.

In addition, Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia can be contacted on 1800 818 338.

2.11 Anonymous feedback

Any feedback that is received anonymously will be acted upon according to this policy however it may not allow for a full investigation to take place or a resolution to be reached.

2.12 Unresolved complaints

Any complaint that cannot be resolved according to the process above must be referred to Chief Executive Officer for review.

3. Source of Obligations

NDIS Quality and Safeguard Framework

4. Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer	<p>To regularly review this policy and to ensure the policy is applied across FPDN.</p> <p>To ensure that all staff within their area of responsibility are educated on the requirements of this policy.</p> <p>Comply with this Policy.</p>
All staff and volunteers	<p>To read this policy and ensure it is understood and applied while undertaking FPDN activities</p>

5. Definitions and abbreviations

Client	Any stakeholder external to the organisation and engaged with FPDN as a service user, consumer, carer, representative, contractor or service provider engaged through FPDN programs.
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction with an FPDN program or service performance. A complaint is where a response and resolution from FPDN is expected.