



TITLE

Feedback and Complaints Policy

POLICY

The Network offers Members, members of the public and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences with the Network. We value this feedback and aim to manage negative feedback (complaints) in a prompt, fair, transparent and consistent manner. We are committed to using de-identified information from all feedback in our planning and evaluation processes.

The Network values and encourages feedback as it assists in the identification of strengths and weaknesses. Complaints provide one form of feedback to the Network that assist us to identify mistakes and/or improve our programs for consumers. Positive feedback reinforces the need for particular activities. The Network has limited resources and so our feedback mechanisms are simple, inexpensive and easy to use.

A complaint and feedback form will be made readily available on the Network website or by contacting the office. All feedback will be recorded in a de-identified way and referred to by Network employees and Board members as part of annual organisational and strategic planning processes.

In all clauses to follow: References to actions by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are taken to include their delegate; and where the complainant raises concerns about the CEO, the complaint will be referred to the Chair or delegate. In such cases, all relevant references to actions by the CEO in this policy can be taken to mean the Chair or delegate.

PROCEDURES

1. Individuals who would like to make a complaint or provide feedback to the organisation are encouraged to contact the Network directly by phone, email or in person.
2. The Network strives to resolve issues, complaints and/or compliments in the first instance and record the person's name (if required for ongoing resolution), the concern and the resolution in the feedback and complaints register. If a complaint cannot immediately be resolved a formal complaint may be lodged. This will also be recorded in the feedback register.
3. The Network will acknowledge receipt of written feedback within five working days and, where necessary, provide a written response within 10 working days.

4. All written feedback will be recorded in the feedback register when received. Verbal feedback may be recorded in the feedback register, as appropriate.

Formal Complaint Lodged

5. Formal complaints must be in writing and may be sent by post or email, or hand delivered to the office. It is strongly suggested that complainants provide their name and contact details for the purpose of resolving the issue effectively.
6. Anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered as part of planning and evaluation processes, however, without contact details, a complaint cannot be formally responded to.
7. All complainants will be given access to the Network's Feedback and Complaints Form. If a complainant requires assistance to complete the form, they will be encouraged to seek assistance from a third party such as the Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT, HealthCare Consumers' Association ACT, Carers ACT, the ACT Human Rights Commission or other suitable organisation.
8. Although the Network strives to respond to complaints within 10 working days, if the complaint is complex and requires significant investigation, we reserve the right to contact the complainant and advise that additional time is required for this reason.

Investigation

9. On receipt of a formal complaint, the CEO will investigate the complaint, refer to organisational policies and procedures and take all reasonable and cost-effective steps to gather any information that relates to the complaint.
10. If other people are involved in the complaint, these people will be advised that a complaint has been lodged and that they may need to be interviewed.

Resolving the Complaint

11. The CEO will negotiate with the complainant on an acceptable resolution to the complaint. The manner in which this will occur depends on the nature of the complaint.
12. The person who made the complaint will be encouraged to bring a support person with them to this negotiation.

Report, Record and Take Action

13. The CEO will document the resolution, particularly any action we have committed to undertake as a result of the complaint.
14. A complaint may identify a lack of policy or poor process within the organisation that requires further action.
15. Information from the complaints system will be used in organisational evaluation and planning.

Lodging an Appeal

16. A complainant or their advocate may lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision made by the CEO.
17. An appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the Executive Committee for investigation and response.
18. The timeframe for response will be dependent on the nature of the complaint and negotiated on an individual basis.

19. If the complainant is not satisfied with the appeal outcome, they will be encouraged to raise the matter with an external agency such the ACT Human Rights Commission for further guidance and support.