



FEEDBACK, COMPLAINTS & DISPUTES PROCEDURE

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To outline the processes through which Lifelong Pathways manages feedback, complaints and disputes in a manner that is fair, prompt, confidential and without retribution.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all Lifelong Pathways activities and workers.

3.0 INTERPRETATION

- 3.1 *Dispute* A dispute is considered to have arisen if a person providing feedback or making a complaint is not satisfied with the response from Lifelong Pathways.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Director of Lifelong Pathways is responsible for ensuring:
- 4.1.1 This procedure is adopted by the organisation.
 - 4.1.2 All employees of Lifelong Pathways are aware of, and comply with, the content of this procedure.
- 4.2 All workers of Lifelong Pathways are responsible for ensuring that they:
- 4.2.1 Are aware of and understand the content of this procedure.
 - 4.2.2 Seek clarification from the Director of Lifelong Pathways, for any items within this procedure that they do not understand.
 - 4.2.3 Adhere to the requirements and content of this procedure at all times when functioning as a representative of Lifelong Pathways.

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Commitment statement

- 5.1.1 Lifelong Pathways are committed to:
- i. Regularly seeking feedback, both positive and negative, from clients and others affected by Lifelong Pathways' services.
 - ii. Upholding the rights of persons with a disability (See [Section 5.2](#)).
 - iii. Handling feedback, complaints and disputes in a manner that is fair, transparent, prompt and confidential.
 - iv. Attempting to resolve all complaints and disputes.
 - v. Ensuring that there is never any recrimination or retribution for those who provide feedback or make complaints.

5.2 Client Rights

- 5.2.1 Persons with a disability, and all clients have the right to:

- i. Services that do not result in abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
- ii. Provide feedback which is used to direct service reviews and improvement.
- iii. Be treated with respect.
- iv. The protection of privacy.
- v. Fair, equitable, timely, professional and consistent feedback and complaint handling.
- vi. Clear explanations of the reasons for decisions that are made.

5.3 Persons Eligible to Provide Feedback or Make a Complaint

- 5.3.1 Any person who wishes to, may provide feedback or make a complaint to Lifelong Pathways.

5.4 Items for Which Feedback may be Provided or a Complaint Made

- 5.4.1 Feedback may be provided about any aspect of the undertakings of Lifelong Pathways, including but not limited to:
 - i. The content or quality of Lifelong Pathways services.
 - ii. The actions or conduct of a Lifelong Pathways worker.
 - iii. Other Lifelong Pathways processes or activities.

5.5 How to Provide Feedback or Make a Complaint

- 5.5.1 Feedback and complaints may be submitted to Lifelong Pathways in one of four ways:
 - i. The Lifelong Pathways Feedback & Complaints Form.
 - ii. In person, to any Lifelong Pathways worker.
 - iii. By telephone, after contacting Lifelong Pathways on 0459 543 356 (0459-LIFELONG) or 0466 972 849 (04669-PATHWAYS).
 - iv. In an appropriate written format, including but not limited to, mail and email at:
 - PO Box 819 Mount Barker SA 5251
 - admin@lifelongpathways.com.au
- 5.5.2 Should feedback or a complaint be submitted in person or by telephone to a Lifelong Pathways worker, the worker should as soon as possible document the feedback or complaint in a written format. It is recommended that relevant details are entered onto a Feedback & Complaints Form.
- 5.5.3 If it preferred that feedback and complaints be registered using the Feedback & Complaints Form; however, feedback and complaints from all sources will be considered equally, subject to the amount of information which is provided.

5.6 Required Information

- 5.6.1 If a particular result is desired for the person providing feedback or making a complaint, then action will only be taken to implement that particular outcome if adequate contact details are provided.
- 5.6.2 Anonymous complaints will be accepted and considered as far as possible.
- 5.6.3 Feedback and complaints will only be considered as far as possible, where insufficient details have been provided and further details are unable to be obtained from the person submitting the feedback or complaint.
- 5.6.4 Personal information communicated when providing feedback or making a complaint will only be used by Lifelong Pathways to:
 - i. Review feedback and complaints; and

- ii. Communicate the outcome of reviews to the person who provided the feedback or made the complaint.

5.7 Feedback and Complaints Review Process

- 5.7.1 Clients will not be charged for any items related to investigating or responding to feedback or a complaint.
- 5.7.2 Once received, the Director will, as necessary, assign a reviewer to determine as far as possible:
 - i. What happened to result in the feedback or complaint.
 - ii. The lessons, positive and negative, can be learned by the organisation,
 - iii. Areas in which Lifelong Pathways can improve the performance of its processes and personnel.
 - iv. What actions, if any, will be taken by Lifelong Pathways to improve the performance of its processes and personnel.
 - v. An appropriate response, where necessary, to the person who provided the feedback or made the complaint (See [Section 5.9](#)).
- 5.7.3 The assigned reviewer must ensure that all details and outcomes of the review are recorded. The Feedback & Complaints Review Form may be used, but other recording methods are acceptable.
 - i. For example, presentation of feedback or complaints for discussion at a Lifelong Pathway team meeting, and documenting the discussion and decisions made at that meeting in the minutes will be an acceptable method.
- 5.7.4 The details and outcomes of the review must be submitted as soon as possible to the Director, who will:
 - i. Determine which actions are reasonably practicable; and
 - ii. Coordinate the implementation of these reasonably practicable actions as soon as possible.

5.8 Response to Person providing Feedback or Making Complaint

- 5.8.1 Where contact details have been provided, persons who provide feedback or make a complaint will receive an acknowledgement that their submission has been received.
 - i. This acknowledgement will be provided as soon as possible by the Lifelong Pathways reviewer.
- 5.8.2 A detailed response will be provided to the person providing feedback or making a complaint when their contact details are available, and there is:
 - i. A desired outcome listed in the feedback or complaint which was made; or
 - ii. A review is conducted which finds opportunities for improvement in the services of Lifelong Pathways.
- 5.8.3 Any detailed response will be prepared by the assigned reviewer, and must be approved by the Director before being provided to the person providing feedback or making a complaint.
- 5.8.4 Detailed responses should include:
 - i. An acknowledgement of how the situation has affected the person and their expectations of a quality service.
 - ii. An apology for the impact which has resulted.
 - iii. An explanation of what happened to cause the person's concerns.
 - iv. A summary of the actions to be taken to address the person's concerns and improve the services of Lifelong Pathways.

- 5.8.5 Detailed responses will be provided in writing to all persons involved in the dispute.
- 5.8.6 A Lifelong Pathways Feedback, Complaints and Disputes Response Form may be used to provide the written detailed response.

5.9 Dispute Management

- 5.9.1 If a person providing feedback or making a complaint is not satisfied with the detailed response provided by Lifelong Pathways, they may seek a further review of this response by directly contacting the Director of Lifelong Pathways by:
 - i. Writing to PO Box 819, Mount Barker SA 5251
 - ii. Email to admin@lifelongpathways.com.au
 - iii. Telephone on 0459 543 356 (0459-LIFELONG); or
0466 972 849 (04669-PATHWAYS).
- 5.9.2 The Director of Lifelong Pathways will arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss any remaining concerns and receive any additional information.
- 5.9.3 The Director will then further consider the response of Lifelong Pathways to the matter in dispute, and either:
 - i. Confirm the initial detailed response of Lifelong Pathways.
 - ii. Amend the response of Lifelong Pathways.
 - iii. Instigate a modified or additional review process based on new information which is provided.
- 5.9.4 Once finalised, the Director will ensure that a written confirmation of the dispute decision is provided in writing to all persons involved in the dispute.
- 5.9.5 A Feedback, Complaints and Disputes Response Form may be used to provide the written confirmation of the dispute decision.
- 5.9.6 For NDIS services, should a person not be satisfied with the dispute decision which is communicated to them, then a complaint may be raised with the NDIS Commission.
- 5.9.7 The NDIS Commission may be contacted to make a complaint by the following methods:
 - i. Telephone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines)
 - ii. TTY: 133 677
 - iii. National Relay Service (ask for 1800 035 544)
 - iv. Completing a complaint contact form:
<https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>
- 5.9.8 For consulting services, should a person not be satisfied with the dispute decision which is communicated to them, then a complaint may be raised with the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner.
- 5.9.9 The Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner may be contacted to make a complaint by the following methods:
 - i. Online Complaint Form: <http://www.hcsc.sa.gov.au/online-complaint-form>
 - ii. Telephone: (08) 8226 8666 or 1800 232 007 (SA regional)

5.10 Service Improvement

- 5.10.1 The Director should ensure that feedback, complaints and disputes are considered as part of reviews of service delivery that are conducted by Lifelong Pathways.
 - i. The standard mechanism for this type of review will be discussion of feedback and reviews at Lifelong Pathways team meetings, and documenting decision in the meeting minutes.

5.11 Record Keeping

- 5.11.1 Records must be retained of documentation related to feedback, complaints and disputes, including but not limited to:
- i. Feedback & Complaints Forms.
 - ii. Feedback & Complaints Review Forms.
 - iii. Responses to persons providing feedback or making complaints.
 - iv. Dispute decisions.
- 5.11.2 The Director must ensure that records are retained in a readily accessible format (either hardcopy or electronically) for a period of at least 7 years.

6.0 RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

-  Incident Report & Investigation Forms
-  Feedback & Complaints Review Form
-  Feedback, Complaints and Disputes Response Form