

Complaints Management and Resolution System

This is an extract from our complete Complaints Management and Resolution System Policy and Procedure designed to provide the main information about our policy for customers

Purpose

Pinarc values feedback from people with disability, families, carers, service providers and regulators. Complaints are an important source of information and are used to improve our services wherever possible.

Policy Statement

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. A complaint is letting someone know that your service is not hitting the mark'. A person does not necessarily have to expressly state they wish to make a complaint to have an issue or concern dealt with as a complaint.

(source: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers).

To summarise:

- Is the person expressing dissatisfaction?
- Do they want Pinarc to do something in response to this?
- If the answer is yes to both, a complaint should be recorded.

In dealing with all complaints, Pinarc will be guided by the NDIS Procedural Fairness Guidelines.

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has the right to complain.
2. People making complaints should be supported to access complaints processes including cultural access needs.
3. Robust complaints processes and systems are an important part of quality service management and help safeguard people with disability.

Complaints identify risks and opportunities for Pinarc to continuously improve its services

Customers may wish to engage an advocate at any time in the complaints process. Customers may prefer not to report instances of neglect or abuse to Pinarc but go straight to an advocate or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or the Victorian Disability Worker Commission.

Responsibilities

The CEO is the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer is responsible for ensuring complaints are recorded and actioned.

The manager of the area or the staff member actioning the complaint is responsible for communicating with customers, family, carers and other key stakeholders during a complaints process.

All staff are responsible for the implementation of the complaints management and resolution system. This includes supporting people accessing Pinarc services to raise any concerns or complaints they have on any issue.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints can be received verbally, in writing or in other way that suits the person making the complaint. Customers can make a complaint directly, or others can also complain on behalf of the customer. In this document, complainants are referred to as customers' and encompasses all people who may make a complaint about Pinarc services

Other methods we receive feedback from customer's include:

- Pinarc's website
- Pinarc staff noting verbal feedback from customers on an internal form

Anonymous complaints can be made by writing to Pinarc or through Pinarc's website contact us form.

Generally, complaints will fall into 2 categories:

1. First point of contact resolution complaints that can be dealt with immediately, to the customers satisfaction
2. Escalated complaints that need further investigation or escalation to be resolved.

In addition, some aspects of a complaint may need to be reported to police, the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission, DHHS, DFFH, the Victorian Disability Worker Commission or other regulatory bodies. Specifically, any complaint made about any of the below have external reporting requirements and should immediately be escalated to the CEO.

- serious incidents as defined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- theft
- accidents, injuries or death.
- allegations of staff sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability
- allegations of sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person for sexual activity
- the use of an unauthorised restrictive practice in relation to a person with disability.

Complaints about the CEO

If a customer has a complaint about the CEO, the staff member will provide the customer's contact details to the Deputy CEO or a Board Member. The Deputy CEO or Board member will contact the customer within 1 business day to acknowledge the complaint. The Deputy CEO or Board Member will contact the Board Chair at the earliest possible time to provide the contact details of the customer and any information known about the complaint. It is not the role of the Deputy CEO or Board Member to investigate or resolve the complaint. In this instance, Board Chair will act as the Complaints Officer, and is responsible for investigating, resolving, reporting and closing the complaint as per this policy.

Complaints from Children and Young People

Pinarc values feedback from children and young people. We recognise children and young people, particularly those with communication challenges, may not be able articulate that they wish to make a complaint or have a concern they wish to raise. Instead, expressions of dissatisfaction are shown through behaviours or other forms of communication. Staff are encouraged to proactively look for complaints made in this way and follow the complaints process for resolution.

Pinarc recognises that parents, family members and carers are often advocates for their children with children's complaints being brought to Pinarc's attention through the child's advocate. We equally recognise that this is not always the case and all complaints and concerns raised by children, either directly or through an advocate, are taken seriously and promptly acted upon via the complaints process.

Pinarc will act with due care when responding to complaints and concerns raised by children, particularly where actions to resolve the complaint may result in an increased risk of harm to the child. Staff will immediately escalate instances where a child's safety is at risk to their manager, the Deputy CEO or the CEO.

Pinarc Responsibilities

Providing information to customers:

Customers and their families or carers receive information about the Pinarc complaints process and further options for action that can be taken, including the right to go directly to The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and/or the Victorian Disability Worker Commission. This information is provided when customers sign a Service Agreement with Pinarc in the Welcome Pack. Child-friendly information for how to raise an issue is also included in information packs and displayed at sites. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that customers and their families or carers have access to this information.

Confidentiality

People involved in the complaints process are responsible for ensuring that confidentiality is maintained. Allegations of harassment and discrimination carry the risk of defamation especially if confidentiality has not been properly maintained. Written information is maintained under strict privacy provisions and is subject to both organisational policy and procedure and legislation.

Protection from Victimisation

Pinarc will ensure that making a complaint will not have a negative impact on a customer's ongoing participation with Pinarc or lead to any form of discrimination. Customers services will not be jeopardised by making a complaint.