

## ACT Group Complaints Handling Policy and Process

### OUR COMMITMENT

Australian Childhood Trauma Group provides a high quality of service. We will use all feedback, including complaints to evaluate and improve the services we offer.

This policy sets out how you can make a complaint and have your concerns addressed. We will review this policy and our services regularly.

### FAIR AND REASONABLE TREATMENT

We resolve complaints fairly and efficiently. Anyone making a complaint will be treated fairly, with courtesy, consideration and respect.

We will maintain impartiality, confidentiality and transparency when we manage complaints.

We will handle all records in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

### RESPONSIVENESS

We recognise that some people have particular needs or require extra assistance in expressing a grievance or making a complaint. We will be flexible when dealing with complaints and use complaints handling methods that help us resolve issues as quickly as possible.

If you need assistance with English, you can telephone 131 450 for Translating and Interpreting Service National, which offers support for over 120 languages and dialects at any time of the day or night.

### EFFICIENCY

We resolve complaints within 30 days of receipt whenever possible. If a complaint takes longer than this to resolve, for example if it is a very sensitive or complex matter, we will let you know. We will tell you about the progress of your complaint as we work to resolve it.

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Our employees are aware of the service standards and procedures set out in this policy and the Customer Charter.

The CEO will be given regular reports on complaints received.

Unless a complaint is a simple one which can be resolved the first time we are contacted, we will fully document all complaints and maintain details of decisions and actions taken on an official file.

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

Summary of process:

1. Initially raise your concern directly with the person involved.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can request the matter be referred to management.
3. If management is not suitable to address your concern or is further unable to resolve it, the matter will be referred to the CEO.
4. If no satisfactory outcome is achieved, you may choose to contact an external agency for review or refer the matter to the relevant professional body.

### 1. RESOLVING THE MATTER

Complaints at this level usually involve simple misunderstandings or provide an opportunity for a grievance to be heard informally. As such we ask that you raise your concern or grievance directly with your clinician or relevant staff member.

### 2. REFERRAL TO MANAGEMENT

If we can't resolve your complaint at the first level, the matter will be referred to the Clinical and Operations Leads.

The role of Management is to:

- help staff and people making a complaint in the complaints-handling process
- maintain a register of complaints received
- maintain and review our complaints-handling framework
- Inform the CEO of the receipt and outcome of formal complaints.

### 3. REFERRAL TO CEO

If referring a complaint to the Clinical and/or Operations Lead would lead to a conflict of interest, the matter will be referred to the CEO, who may appoint another person to address the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the Clinical or Operations Lead's decision, you can request the matter be referred to the CEO.

### 4. EXTERNAL REVIEW

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint, which is not a privacy complaint, at any stage you are entitled to pursue an external method of review.

Avenues of external review or complaints handling can include (but are not limited to):

- mediation and arbitration
- the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Australian Psychological Society
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- Australian Association of Social Workers

While you are free to use these methods at any time, we strongly recommend you use our internal review before seeking independent assistance.

While we are committed to resolving complaints within 30 days whenever possible, external reviews will have their own timeframes.

## **STEPS IN THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We will acknowledge your complaint and tell you the process we will follow, we will also give you the contact details of the person who will be handling your complaint.

### **ASSESSMENT**

We will determine the nature of your complaint and the best way to handle it.

### **INVESTIGATION (IF NEEDED)**

Simple and straight forward complaints can often be resolved on first contact. If this isn't possible and the complaint is referred to management, we will investigate to make sure that we have all the relevant information. This could include interviewing you and the staff member(s) involved and clearing up any misunderstandings or seeking any legal advice.

### **RESPONSE**

Once we have finished any investigation and made a decision or findings, we will tell you what the outcome is and explain how it came about. We will also tell you what your options are to have our findings reviewed, or to pursue your complaint externally.

## IMPROVEMENT

If we receive a complaint that highlights a systemic problem that we have, we will use the feedback we receive to review our policies and procedures and will make some changes if we think we can improve.

### Document Management

VERSION	DATE	SUBMITTED BY	POSITION	AUTHORISED BY	MEETING DATE
1	Jan 20	Sophie Corbett	Operations Lead	Sophie Corbett & Yaso Samaranayake	Jan 2020

### Revision History

VERSION	DATE	ADDITIONAL/AMENDMENTS	AUTHOR	REVIEWED BY