

# YMCA NSW

## Complaints and Feedback Policy



### 1. Document control

<b>Overview</b>	YMCA NSW recognises respects and encourages the rights of all individuals to raise complaints and provide feedback without fear of retribution. Complaints and feedback will be accepted via various channels and will be handled fairly, professionally and confidentially, in the interests of expediency, the best possible outcome for all parties, and quality improvement.
<b>Objective</b>	To provide clear guidelines to YMCA NSW staff in responding to and handling complaints and feedback fairly, professionally and confidentially.
<b>Scope</b>	All YMCA NSW staff and volunteers including Board Directors, student placements, any consultants or contractors engaged by YMCA NSW and clients of YMCA NSW.
<b>Policy owner</b>	Chief Risk Officer
<b>Policy approver</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Effective date</b>	TBC
<b>Review date</b>	TBC
<b>Related procedures</b>	Complaints and Feedback Procedure

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 1 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

**YMCA NSW**

## Complaints and Feedback Policy

**2. Definitions**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Staff</b>	Any person YMCA NSW employs, or engages – including paid employees, volunteers, Board Directors, contractors, consultants and student placements.
<b>Employee</b>	Paid employees of YMCA NSW.
<b>Volunteer</b>	Unpaid volunteers, student placements and board directors.
<b>Client</b>	Any user of YMCA NSW services – children's services, recreation services, camping services and community programs including children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians and facility users.
<b>Complaint</b>	An expression of dissatisfaction about a service, person, action taken or lack of action taken, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
<b>Complainant</b>	Person, organisation or their representative who makes a complaint.
<b>Complaint Management</b>	The end to end process of complaint notification, acknowledgement, assessment, investigation, response, action and analysis.
<b>Feedback</b>	An expression of satisfaction or acknowledgement or a suggestion for improvement about an organisation's services or people that can be used as a basis for improvement.
<b>Grievance</b>	<p>Any type of problem, concern or complaint related to an employee or volunteers work environment raised by staff. It can include an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision impacting an employee or volunteer that may be considered unreasonable, unfair or unjustified. A grievance can either be informal (verbal) or formal (written). Examples of a grievance include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complaint relating to safety in the workplace</li> <li>• Discrimination, harassment or bullying</li> <li>• Unfair leave allocation</li> <li>• rosters or hours of work or wage/salary levels</li> </ul> <p>Grievances are not managed through this policy, please see YMCA NSW Grievance Policy.</p>
<b>Online Reporting System</b>	Information System used by YMCA NSW reporting and managing incidents that is accessed via the YMCA NSW Intranet Home Page. (Risk Wizard)
<b>Investigation</b>	A systematic and thorough examination of incidents and/or complaints in order to discover facts or gain information and identify root causes of an incident and/or complaint.
<b>Review</b>	An examination of the factors involved in an incident and/or complaint to identify the root cause and corrective actions that can be implemented to reduce the risk of the incident and/or complaint reoccurring.

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 2 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

## YMCA NSW

### Complaints and Feedback Policy



#### 3. Policy statement

YMCA NSW is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling. We receive feedback and complaints as part of our commitment to be continuously improving our services and ensure that services provided meet the needs of our clients.

YMCA NSW responds to all complaints, feedback and suggestions in a professional and timely manner. YMCA NSW takes complaints and feedback seriously and investigates all concerns fairly and equitably, endeavouring to produce a positive and transparent outcome for all involved. Complaints are handled with respect and confidentiality.

#### 4. What YMCA will do to promote this policy

YMCA NSW is committed to ensuring all complaints, and feedback are acknowledged, responded to and actioned in a structured and timely manner that promotes customer satisfaction and continual improvement. The Complaints and Feedback Policy will be embedded through training activities, team meetings and governance. Monitoring and compliance activities will be undertaken by the YMCA NSW Risk and Compliance team on an ongoing basis.

#### 5. Policy Requirements

- YMCA NSW clients can raise complaints about any aspect of service delivery offered by YMCA NSW and have their issues addressed in a supportive manner that complies with relevant legislation and standards (see Section 7).
- Feedback or suggestions for service improvement are managed and recorded at a local site level. Staff are to take all feedback and suggestions seriously and document the follow-up and actions taken to research them at a local level.
- YMCA NSW services will provide information to clients regarding the methods and processes available to address any concerns and feedback they may have, this will be easy to access, meaningful and user friendly.
- YMCA NSW staff will treat each person making a complaint in a manner that protects their privacy and respects their confidentiality and right to make a complaint.
- No complainant will have their services or supports, or those of people they know affected by making a complaint to or about YMCA NSW.
- All YMCA NSW services will ensure that Customer Feedback Forms are available on site and are accessible to any member of the public wishing to access them.
- YMCA NSW staff are aware of their responsibilities for reporting a complaint and assisting clients to make a complaint.
- Staff who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults consider their vulnerability and listen carefully to any feedback or complaint they make as they may not use known "complaint" language.

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 3 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

## YMCA NSW

### Complaints and Feedback Policy



- All complaints are to be reported in the online reporting system within 24hrs. All documentation including written complaints, where applicable, are to be uploaded to the system. Staff are required to indicate both internal and external stakeholders that have been or are required to be notified of the complaint such as managers, Child Protection Unit, FaCS, Council Partners, Police. This is completed within the online reporting system within the 'Report/ed internally/externally' field.
- Managers will provide assistance to staff to effectively manage complaints in a timely manner.
- Managers are responsible for assessing the severity of complaints in order to determine the level of involvement required from subject matter experts and investigation needed.
- All Safeguarding Children and Young People complaints are to be managed according to the *Reporting Child Protection Concerns Policy*. These complaints are reviewed by the YMCA NSW Child Protection Unit; no investigation should be initiated by centre/service staff unless directed by the Child Protection Unit. Staff are responsible for reporting these complaints to their manager and/or the Child Protection Unit and should await feedback before taking any further actions.
- If a complaint refers to alleged staff negligence, the manager is responsible for reporting this and seeking assistance from subject matter experts such as Human Resources, Child Protection Unit.
- YMCA NSW staff are empowered to respond, investigate and resolve complaints that are brought to their attention where applicable.
- Complainants are kept informed at all stages of the investigation process concerning their complaint and are provided a personalised response that includes the reasons for the final outcome.
- All staff will endeavour to meet the below timeframes, when identifying, reporting and managing complaints.

Complaints Process Stage	Timeframe
Acknowledgement	2 working days after receipt
Investigation and Resolution – less serious	10 working days after receipt
Investigation and Resolution – serious	20 working days after receipt
Follow Up	28 working days after resolution

- Complaints are expected to be dealt with promptly. YMCA NSW has determined timeframes for the effective management of the complaints process as per the NSW Ombudsman suggested timeframes, these are described in detail in Appendix A.
- Support will be provided to staff throughout the process of managing feedback and complaints in an unbiased manner, encouraging good listening, thorough investigations and regular communication leading to making decisions based on logical proof of evidence.
- Complainants who are unsatisfied with the resolution offered by YMCA NSW have the right to approach a more senior person within YMCA NSW.

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 4 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

## YMCA NSW

### Complaints and Feedback Policy



- YMCA NSW can seek additional feedback about services through surveys, service reviews, client consultations and encouraging informal feedback from clients.
- Trend analysis, reviews and management reporting is conducted on complaints logged within the YMCA NSW Online Reporting System. This information is analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continual improvement.

#### 6. Accountability and responsibility

Role	Responsibility
<b>YMCA NSW Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation.</li> <li>• Regularly review and discuss reports about complaints handling, including trends and implications.</li> </ul>
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage an environment where complaints are handled seriously and thoroughly.</li> <li>• Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.</li> <li>• Ensure an effective, fair and transparent complaint management system is developed and in place for YMCA NSW.</li> <li>• Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate resources are available and utilised for effective complaint management.</li> <li>• Provide regular reports to YMCA NSW Board on issues arising from complaint handling.</li> <li>• Ensure managers understands their obligations in accordance with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.</li> <li>• Plan organisational resources and requirements for policy implementation.</li> <li>• Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure access to policy for all YMCA NSW staff.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate ongoing training is provided for all staff for the policy's implementation.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.</li> <li>• Provide advice and support to staff in relation to this policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Managers and Supervisors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>• Promote the Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure to staff and clients, as well as demonstrating commitment to the on-going improvement of the complaint management system.</li> <li>• Model a positive attitude towards resolving complaints and encourage staff and clients to feel confident about raising issues.</li> <li>• Support staff if a complaint has been raised against them, giving them the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by a complainant so their version of events are taken into account.</li> <li>• Commitment to providing skill based training on complaints management outlined in this policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Members and Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>• Be aware of YMCA NSW's complaint handling policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Assist people who wish to make complaints access the YMCA NSW's</li> </ul>

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 5 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

## YMCA NSW

### Complaints and Feedback Policy



	<p>complaints process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints to resolve matters promptly.</li> <li>• Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>• Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management.</li> </ul>
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## 7. Interactions with related documents

Related policies	Link to the policy
Incident Reporting & Management Policy	
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	
Grievance Policy	
Risk Management Policy	
Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy	
Reporting Child Protection Concerns Policy	

Related procedures	Link to the procedure
Complaints and Feedback Procedure	
Incident Reporting & Management Procedure	
Investigation Procedure	
Critical Incident Procedure	
Grievance Procedure	

Other related documentation	Link to documentation
Customer Feedback Form	
YMCA NSW online reporting system	
Risk Wizard Training Guide	
Template Acknowledgement Letter	
Template Response Letter	

Related legislation	
The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)	Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 No 2
Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 No 104	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010
Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No 41	NSW Disability Services Standards
AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations	

## 8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Complaints and Feedback Policy will be reviewed annually by and in consultation with YMCA NSW Board, Executive Leadership Team and other stakeholders.

## 9. Endorsement

I endorse the Complaints and Feedback Policy:

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 6 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

**YMCA NSW**  
Complaints and Feedback Policy



Name		Role
Signature		Date

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<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 7 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		

**YMCA NSW**

## Complaints and Feedback Policy

## Appendix A



Complaint Rating	Example/Impact	Acknowledgement timeframe	Timeframe for Resolution	Method of Response	Responsible for Investigating	Responsible for managing complaint	Follow Up with Complainant
<b>Catastrophic</b>	Actual legal demand, media or publicity	Within 24 hours	Complaint requiring thorough investigation involving Support Services	In writing, using template letter, as deemed appropriate	Senior Management (with support from subject matter experts)	Regional Manager in consultation with ELT	One week to one month after the complaint has been resolved and actions implemented.
<b>Major</b>	Threat of media or legal action Incorrect management of previous complaint Stolen goods totalling >\$500 External party involved (Fair Trade)	Within 48 hours	Complaint requiring thorough investigation.	In writing, using template letter, as deemed appropriate	Regional Manager (with support from subject matter experts)	Centre Manager in consultation with the Regional Manager and ELT	Follow-up focuses on reviewing the implementation progress of the actions.
<b>Moderate</b>	Ongoing, recurring, issues such as; Staff/Patron conduct, Facilities in centre not working correctly, Membership/fee errors Stolen goods totalling <\$500, >\$100	Within 48 hours	Complaint that requires investigation. Feedback can be provided within 48hrs	In writing using template letter	Centre Manager (with support from subject matter experts)	Centre Manager in consultation with the Regional/Area Manager (if necessary)	Follow-up focuses on getting feedback from the complainant about whether the actions implemented have resolved their complaint.
<b>Minor</b>	One-off or isolated error in payment charged/account, equipment not working Stolen goods totalling <\$100 Minor staff/patron conduct	Within 48 hours	Complaint that requires basic investigation. Feedback can be provided within 24hrs	Face-to-face or verbal unless complaint received in writing	Person who took complaint	Manager on duty in consultation with Centre Manager	
<b>Insignificant</b>	Coffee cold Spill that is cleaned up straight away	Immediate	Complaint that can be resolved immediately	Face-to-face or verbal	Person who took complaint	Manager on duty	Follow-up on the next visit

Refer to the YMCA NSW Incident Reporting and Management Policy.

<i>File</i>	Complaints and Feedback Policy			Page 8 of 8	
<i>Saved</i>	[AutoDate]	<i>Version author</i>	Liz Durrell	<i>Distribution</i>	UnlimitedDocument Template
<i>Version</i>	5	<i>Version status</i>	For Final Review		