

1.0 PURPOSE

Autism Queensland (AQ) is committed to an effective complaints management system whereby complaints are managed in a proactive and accountable, transparent, timely and fair manner.

Autism Queensland recognises effective complaints management is integral to quality client service and values all feedback.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure:

- fair, accountable, transparent and responsive management of complaints about AQ's services;
- prompt handling of complaints as close to the source as possible;
- effective monitoring and resolution of complaints;
- identification and implementation of business improvements.

2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of Autism Queensland. A reference to "employees" or "staff" includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of AQ in any capacity.

This Policy also applies to all clients who access services provided by AQ, including children and young people under the age of 18.

3.0 POLICY

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the AQ's services or staff that requires a response or resolution.

The complaint management principles underlying this policy reflect the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002-2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.

4.0 PRINCIPLES

Autism Queensland is committed to the following complaints management principles:

- a) provision of a free and accessible complaints process that supports natural justice and procedural fairness for all persons with no reprisals or detriment from making a complaint;
- b) people have the right to be supported by a friend, an advocate, an interpreter or a community elder;
- c) provision of information about where to lodge a complaint, how to make a complaint and how complaints will be managed, including referring complaints to external agencies, where required;
- d) opportunity for complaints to be made anonymously, with complainants advised of the limitations of an anonymous complaint;
- e) provision of clear information about what can or cannot be achieved by a complaints process, and providing assistance to anyone who wishes to make a complaint;
- f) acknowledgement of any complaint within 48 hours;
- g) responding to complainants in a respectful, fair, objective and timely manner, that respects the confidentiality of personal information;
- h) communicating with parties about the progress of the complaint;
- i) providing a clear explanation of the final decision, any recommendations, review options and any available external review mechanisms;
- j) adherence to AQ's record keeping policy and procedure including the use of the approved complaint management system to monitor and review progress of the complaint;
- k) wherever relevant inform the continuous improvement of Autism Queensland's procedures and practices;
- l) abusive, aggressive or disrespectful behaviour towards employees will not be tolerated.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for:

- establishing a system that manages complaints effectively and efficiently;
- ensuring all staff are appropriately trained in complaints management;
- reviewing recommendations, and providing management responses, made through investigation reports, internal reviews or any complaint management process that relates to business process improvement;
- ensuring recommendations made through investigation reports, internal reviews and any complaint management process are implemented, within agreed timeframes;
- ensuring ongoing continuous improvement of service delivery by making changes to process where the trends and issues identified indicate a change to service delivery process is required;
- referring matters to an external agency for action if/when necessary.

Employees are responsible for:

- ensuring all complaints are handled in accordance with AQ's Complaints Management policy and procedures;
- Documenting and maintaining accurate complaint management records via the Quality Assurance management system.

6.0 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT REPORTING

All complaints must be entered into the Autism Queensland's Quality Assurance system – MANGO. Complaints are then reviewed by the relevant Coordinator and investigation is assigned to the relevant Senior Manager who then reports back to the Coordinator on progress of the investigation.

Reports or allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child will be actioned immediately in accordance with the AQQA Child Protection Policy & Procedure.

7.0 EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

Complaints about Autism Queensland may also be directed externally to bodies including, but not limited to:

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
- Fair Work Ombudsman
- Queensland Government – Department of Education and Training
- Queensland Government - Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

8.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation and Regulations

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)

Standards and Principles

Australian Privacy Principles

COMPLAINTS MANAGMENT POLICY



Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1002-2014 Guidelines for complaints management in organizations

Human Services Quality Standards (Dept Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services)

National Disability Standards (Cth)

Autism Queensland Quality Assurance

AQQA Child Protection Policy & Procedure

AQQA Client Protection Policy & Procedure

AQQA Clients' Rights and Feedback Policy

AQQA Code of Conduct

AQQA Privacy Policy

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