



## Complaints and Appeals Guidelines

### Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline Anglicare North Coast's (ANC) complaints process. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the ANC Complaints and Appeals Policy.

### Responsibilities

Anglicare North Coast operational policy documents must be ratified by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for regularly reviewing this policy. Responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

Who	Commitment	How
CEO or chair of the governing body	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to the governing body on our complaint handling. Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.</li> <li>• Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>• Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.</li> <li>• Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</li> </ul>
Staff whose duties include complaint handling (may include CEO or chair of the governing body)	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>• Assist people to make a complaint, if needed. Comply with our policy and associated procedures. Provide regular feedback to management and/or the governing body on issues arising from complaints.</li> <li>• Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve our complaints management system.</li> <li>• Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.</li> </ul>

All staff	Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>• Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures. Assist people who wish to make complaints access our complaints process.</li> <li>• Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints resolve matters promptly.</li> </ul>
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## Procedure

### *Receiving a complaint*

Complaints come in a variety of ways. These may be written, verbal, email or SMS or any other form of correspondence to Anglicare North Coast people. No matter the method, a C&A needs to be treated diligently. **Complaints can be sent directly to the CEO or Administration Coordinator at PO Box 401, Grafton, NSW, 2460 or by phoning 02 6643 4844.**

When receiving a complaint or appeal from a client/client representative/stakeholder, employees should implement the following practices:

- Explain the C&A process and advise that a written report may be completed;
- Ask if they would like a copy of the C&A brochure
- Ask if they would like a copy of this policy and procedure;
- Advise that their service provision will be maintained (where relevant);
- Listen carefully to the details provided;
- Receive the information impartially, and without offering personal opinion;
- Ask whether the person would like a support person or advocate to be present;
- Ask if they would like to nominate a key person to communicate with them throughout then process
- Ask if they would like details of external resolution agencies, such as ACNC, Fair Trading or tenants' advocacy groups
- Record the details of the C&A and ask what outcome is preferred;
- Advise that the C&A will be registered, reviewed and actioned.

### *Documentation*

- Within 2 working days provide an acknowledgement of receipt by the same media (written, SMS, email etc.) the C&A was received.
- Document the C&A as accurately as possible;
- C&A received are to be summarised in monthly reports at all levels (i.e. Coordinator to Manager; Manager to CEO).

### *Responsibilities*

- If there is an allegation of gross misconduct, unethical or illegal activity, the documented C&A must be forwarded to the CEO;
- If the matter can be immediately resolved or actioned to the satisfaction of the client/client representative/stakeholder – then do it, and record actions on the form;
- If the matter requires greater attention, the form is to be referred to the Manager for follow up – if resolved then record actions on the form and submit. If not resolved escalate to the CEO
- All C&A will be recorded in the C&A Register, which is held by the CEO and maintained in a secure

location;

- Completed forms are to be forwarded to the CEO.

### **Complaints Progress and Conclusion report**

- Progress reports (written or verbal) are to be provided to the client/client representative/stakeholder and nominated key person on a regular basis during the course of the complaints process. Records of correspondence must be maintained.
- A final report is to be provided to the client/client representative/stakeholder that outlines the outcome of the complaint.

Types of outcome include:

- identified improvement (e.g. policy gap, systemic fault)
- dismissed as unsubstantiated
- found true but no further action
- an apology
- disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **Appeals**

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies).

### **Internal Appeals**

If you feel that the procedure set out has not been followed and/or that the outcome was unfair, you can appeal to the CEO. If the complaint concerned the CEO then you can appeal directly to the Chair of the Board. In either case the CEO or the Chair will investigate the appeal and make a determination as to the suitability of the process and the outcomes. The CEO or Chair may implement alternative outcomes if they believe this is appropriate. **Appeals can be sent directly to the CEO or Administration Coordinator at PO Box 401, Grafton, NSW, 2460 or by phoning 02 6643 4844.**

If a staff member is unhappy with the outcomes of the process they are entitled to lodge a grievance, in accordance with our Staff Grievance Policy.

### **External Appeals**

If you feel your complaint has not been properly dealt with by the organisation, you may wish to take it to an external appeals process or obtain further advice from:

#### **NSW Housing Appeals Committee**

Call 1800 629 794 or 02 8741 2555

Email: [hac@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hac@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)

<https://www.hac.nsw.gov.au/>

#### **Fair Trading NSW**

Call 13 32 20 (8.30am – 5pm, Mon – Fri)

[www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission**

Call 13 22 62 (9am – 5pm, Mon – Fri)

[www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

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### **Service NSW**

Call 13 77 88

**National Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

Call 1300 006 228

<https://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au/>

**Northern Rivers Aboriginal Tenants Advocacy and Advice Service**

1800 248 913 or 6643 4426

[www.tenants.org.au/aboriginal-tenants](http://www.tenants.org.au/aboriginal-tenants)

**Northern Rivers Tenants Advocacy and Advice Service**

1800 649 135 or 6621 1022

[www.tenants.org.au/taas/nortaas](http://www.tenants.org.au/taas/nortaas)

## Relevant standards and regulations

AS/ISO 10002:2018 Quality Management – Customer Satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations

## Related documents

- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Incident/Event Report form
- Complaints and Appeals Register

## Compliance

Noncompliance to this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## Guide for staff in providing information to clients about our complaints and appeals process

*The following guide may assist you in explaining this policy to clients. Please also ensure that you provide clients with a copy of our Complaints brochure.*

### COMPLAINTS

- If you are dissatisfied with something we have done, you can make a complaint to a member of our team. You can do this however you wish, such as by writing a letter, emailing, texting or phoning.
- We will record your complaint and pass it on to the appropriate Manager.
- Within 2 working days, we will let you know that we have received your complaint, are investigating it and when we expect to let you know the outcome.
- The matter will be investigated. This will involve checking what actually happened and may involve you and other people, including staff, being contacted to find out more about what happened.
- The Manager will determine what actions we need to take as a result of the complaint. This could

involve 'no action', or action such as changing a system or providing our staff with more training.

- We will let you know the outcome and how you can appeal if you are still dissatisfied.
- You have the right to have external resolution at any point and to be provided with contact details for ANC and external resolution entities

## Document Control

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**Approved by:** Leon Ankersmit (CEO)

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Reviewed Date	Version No.	Comments
12/05/2020	1.0	Supersedes CCC policy which included procedures. Inclusion of external resolution.
5/1/2021	1.1	Addition of Housing Appeals Committee information. Approved by CEO