

Spirometry Learning Australia

# **Feedback and Complaints Policy**

### Policy Statement

Feedback and complaints provide valuable information and give us an opportunity to learn and improve. Feedback may be of a sensitive nature and the service user's right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected. Any information relating to the complaint will be distributed on a need to know basis.

All complaints will be resolved at the service level where possible and in the shortest time practicable.

Service users can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly and for staff to take steps to ensure that service users feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

The complaints management process will be simple and easy to use and effectively communicated and promoted to all service users and stakeholders.

### Definitions

**Complaint** - any written or verbal statement outlining a problem or concern involving the organisation including its staff, the service they provide, or the terms of engagement or contract with the organisation.

**Feedback** - information given by a service user, stakeholder or community member in relation to the organisation and may be in the form of a compliment, suggestion or complaint.

**Compliment** - an explicit expression of satisfaction or praise in relation to the organisation or a staff member working on behalf of the organisation.

**Suggestion** - a comment that indicates how the organisation could improve its service delivery. It may be part of a compliment or complaint but may also be offered as standalone information.

**Complaint resolution** - a complaint is resolved when both parties reach an agreement. The parties will be informed, in writing, of the complaint agreement.

**Vexatious grievances** - where complainants use the complaint/grievance resolution process without reasonable cause, the processes as outlined above will still be adhered to. If complaints are malicious or vexatious and therefore not made in good faith, the complainant may be referred to undertake counselling and/or other actions if appropriate.

**Corrective action** - addressing an ongoing systemic issue to eliminate the root cause of the problem to prevent recurrence.

**Confidentiality** - only people directly involved in the complaint as part of the nature of the complaint or the resolution of it will have access to the information about the complaint.

## Procedures

### **Communicating the Feedback and Complaint Policy**

Information is available to course participants about mechanisms to communicate feedback, comments and complaints. This information is available on the website at initial enrolment into the on-line course and also on the evaluation form.

### **Receiving Complaints and other Feedback**

Complaints and/or feedback is directed to the Project Manager verbally or via email and is recorded in the Complaints Register.

### **Complaints Register**

Details are recorded in the Complaints Register, including the date the complaint was made, name and contact details of complainant, nature of complaint, staff involved (if any), action taken and results. (Refer to the Complaints Register Template)

### **Responding to Feedback**

Depending on the type of feedback received, particularly if it is a comment or suggestion for improvement, it may be appropriate to contact the individual who gave the feedback to communicate any changes made as a result of their suggestion. This will contribute to a positive relationship between the organisation and its service users and stakeholders.

### **Responding to a Complaint**

A phone call and follow-up email(s) will be sent to the complainant (or the complainant's nominee) within 5-7 working days of the complaint being received. The response will outline details about what is being done to investigate and resolve the complaint.

In responding to complaints:

- Acknowledge the complaint - acknowledge the concerns and experiences of someone making a complaint, particularly if the issue has caused distress or considerable inconvenience.
- Attempt to resolve the complaint directly with the complainant - clarify the specific issue that the individual is complaining about and their desired outcomes. It may be necessary to contact the complainant to ask for more information.
- Detail how the complaint will be investigated - provide clear timeframes and the contact details for an appropriate person that can be contacted by the complainant if necessary.
- Consider the sensitive and/or confidential nature of a complaint and the privacy of the individual making the complaint - staff will carefully consider what information is recorded and to whom within the organisation the information is communicated to. When completing a Complaints Form, only record factual information that can be supported by evidence or note that the information is not yet substantiated.

## Feedback & Complaints Policy

- Consider whether the complaint needs to be managed in a particular way either because the person making a complaint has specific rights of review or because the complaint includes allegations that must be reported to an external body. For example, criminal allegations should be reported to the Police.
- Reassure the complainant that making a complaint will have no negative consequences or repercussions on their service provision.
- Inform the complainant they can select which staff member is their primary contact regarding the complaint and ask if they wish to nominate a particular person.

**Spirometry Learning Australia** aims to investigate and resolve all complaints within one month of receiving the complaint. If this timeframe cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative timeframe for resolution.

**Spirometry Learning Australia** aims to keep the complainant informed at all stages of the decision-making process concerning their complaint and the reasons for those decisions.

A register of complaints and files containing details of all complaints, actions and resolutions are filed electronically (scanned document originals) in a secure online documents folder.

### **Complaints Resolution and Follow Up**

Feedback information (both positive and negative) is to be considered in operational planning as well as implementation and review activities in the areas of governance, risk management, client services, project management and workplace health and safety.

### **Confidentiality of Complaints and Disputes**

As far as possible, the fact that a service user has lodged a complaint and the details of that complaint are kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The service user's permission is obtained prior to any information being given to other parties that it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint or dispute.

### **Provision of Staff Training in Complaints Handling**

Spirometry Learning Australia will provide and ensure all staff receive information and training as part of their induction on complaints handling.