

# VMIAC POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

## Service Users Complaints Feedback Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

VMIAC encourages consumers and service users to provide feedback, including community consultations, compliments, and complaints, in relation to any aspect of VMIAC's services. The effective management of feedback is essential for improvement of our services and prevention of adverse outcomes, for existing and potential consumers.

This policy directs how VMIAC will comply with legislation and standards relating to our management of feedback, to ensure that all feedback received is appropriately addressed, with changes in service delivery being made where necessary.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Committee of Management (CoM), staff, volunteers, and contractors, receiving or managing feedback and complaints from consumers and service users made to or about us, regarding our services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

This policy does not apply to the raising of concerns or grievances by a member of VMIAC staff. See the Grievances Policy & Procedure.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

#### **Complaint**

An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. (AS/NZ 10002:2014)

This includes complaints being made directly to our organisation through email, letter, phone call or through social media, i.e., Facebook and Twitter.

#### **Complainant**

Person, organisation, or their representative making a complaint.

#### **Compliment**

Information received by VMIAC about something that has been done well and/or satisfaction with services received.

#### **Client satisfaction**

Part of the DSS Score system, the client satisfaction section measures: service, understanding, satisfaction and self-advocacy.

#### **Feedback**

Opinions, comments, suggestions, compliments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

This includes feedback being made directly to our organisation through email, letter, phone call or through social media, i.e., Facebook and Twitter.

#### **Feedback management system**

Encompasses all aspects of the policies, procedures, practices used by VMIAC for the management of feedback.

### Grievance

A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work-related problem. This is covered by the Grievance Policy & Procedure.

### No wrong door approach

A principle that ensures all consumers coming to VMIAC for help are given access to appropriate services.

## 4. POLICY



### General Principles

- No wrong door approach
- The feedback management system will be fair, transparent, visible, and accessible to people in scope for this policy.
- All consumers and service users have a right to complain about any aspect of our services. All complainants and consumers will be treated with respect by staff and will not be adversely affected because of making a complaint.
- The feedback management system will ensure that any issues are identified, acknowledged, reported, documented, and addressed in a timely manner.
- Responses to feedback and complaints are objective, ethical, effective, and unbiased with the aim of achieving a satisfactory and prompt resolution.
- An effective feedback management system must be modelled on the principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency, and integration into organisational culture.
- This policy directs how VMIAC will comply with the National Standards for Disability Services and service management of feedback, to ensure that all feedback received is appropriately addressed, with changes in service delivery being made where necessary.
- VMIAC encourages consumers and service users to provide feedback, including compliments and complaints. The effective management of feedback is essential for improvement of service delivery and prevention of adverse outcomes, for existing and potential consumers.

### Inviting feedback to improve service delivery

VMIAC values active and meaningful engagement and participation by consumers, who are included in activities which support the achievement of the organisation's strategic direction, service co-design and evaluation. A range of opportunities at VMIAC exist to provide both positive and critical feedback, through conversations, surveys or directly via website.

### **Compliments**

Compliments will be shared with staff/ teams they relate to, used to improve service delivery where applicable and acknowledged through reporting processes.

### **Complaint management**

VMIAC is committed to resolving issues relating to service delivery as promptly and effectively as possible, through a three-level system of resolution which is described in the Service User Feedback Complaints Procedure.

### **An accessible process**

VMIAC's feedback system has been designed to meet the needs of consumers, including people who have increased vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation. VMIAC will ensure the complaints process is accessible to all consumers, members, and stakeholders, particularly those who require assistance to understand and/or submit a complaint.

Consumers and other complainants are to be provided with information, support and a safe environment in which to communicate about a complaint. Consumers should be assisted to understand/access advocacy services and advised of their right to engage a support person.

Information on the feedback process will be widely accessible, including prominent displays at VMIAC's offices, information on our website, information at service commencement; annual reviews and ad hoc as required.

### **Unreasonable Conduct by Complainants**

There may be situations where a complainant acts unreasonably in seeking to have their concerns addressed, with behaviours such as aggression, abusive language, arguments, persistent, unacceptable contact, or lack of cooperation.

Where a staff member believes that a complainant's conduct is unreasonable, the manager responsible will review the situation. If the concern about unreasonable behaviour is substantiated, staff will be supported to determine the right strategies for managing such conduct fairly, ethically, and reasonably.

VMIAC will ensure that unreasonable behaviour does not preclude valid issues being addressed.

### **No retaliation**

It is contrary to the values of VMIAC for anyone to retaliate or discriminate against a person in response to them raising a complaint or grievance. Any employee who retaliates against someone who had made a complaint or grievance may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with relevant human resources policies.

### **Confidentiality**

Complaints will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially, ensuring the consumer's privacy and dignity is respected at all times. Potential complainants should be advised of their right to submit a complaint anonymously, or without reference to a particular client, but should be informed about how this may impact on the ability to investigate and respond to the situation.

Collation of complaints data for reports for the purposes of analysing trends and quality improvement should be de-identified to maintain privacy and confidentiality of clients and complainants.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITY**

This organisation expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.

CEO is responsible for:

- Promoting a culture that values feedback and responds to complaints and their effective resolution.
- Reports high risk complaints to the CoM.
- Provides adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.
- Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.
- Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.
- Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.
- Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.

Leadership team is responsible for demonstrating exemplary complaint handling practices.

- Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.
- Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.
- Comply with this policy and associated procedures.
- Provide regular feedback to CEO / Deputy CEO and/or the governing body on issues arising from complaints.
- Provide suggestions to CEO / Deputy CEO on ways to improve our complaints management system.
- Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.

All staff are responsible for understanding and comply with our complaint handling practices.

- Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.
- Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.
- Assist people who wish to make complaints to access our complaints process.
- Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints resolve matters promptly.
- Follow feedback and complaints procedures and work practices.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

The Complaints /Feedback Policy will be communicated throughout VMIAC via:

1. Circulate to staff for feedback
2. Quality Assurance Working Group for review and endorsement
3. Tabled for approval to CoM
4. Once approved distribution via email to staff
5. Inclusion in VMIAC's Sharepoint [Policy & Procedure Folder](#)
6. Inclusion in VMIAC Policy & Procedure manuals
7. Included in Staff orientation and training
8. Update policy guidelines and procedure included in information brochures
9. Publish policy and procedure on website

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

- Service Users Complaints Feedback Procedure
- Score Work Practice for DSS
- Grievance Policy
- Grievance Procedures
- ISO9001:2008 Quality management systems -Requirements
- ISO10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations
- National Standards for Disability Services
- *Disability Services Act 1986* (Cwlth)

## 8. REVISION

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
Category	Feedback and Complaints
Standards	Standard 4 Feedback and Complaints
Policy owner	Corporate Services Manager
Approval authority	Committee of Management
Drafted by	Corporate Services Manager
Date effective	3.3.2022
Date last reviewed	2020
Scheduled review date	2025
Version	5 – 03/03/2022
Content enquiries	Corporate Services Manager