

Feedback and Complaints Policy

All yourtown



Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the handling and management of feedback and complaints at **yourtown**. This policy applies to all **yourtown** personnel.

Internal issues and grievances involving **yourtown** personnel are handled in accordance with People and Culture Policies and Procedures.

Using Feedback and Complaints to Improve Quality and Service Provision

Information received through our feedback and complaint processes is used to act on and resolve the issues and suggestions reported to us.

yourtown also reviews the feedback and complaints we receive as part of monitoring and improving our services to better meet the needs of client groups and individual service users and to assure compliance with legislative and contractual requirements. Summary information from our feedback and complaints systems is analysed and used in our business planning and budgeting processes to ensure the quality and effectiveness of our services.

Positive feedback is communicated to relevant personnel as part of celebrating our successes and recognising the work performed by our personnel. We may also use feedback from stakeholders in our publications or newsletters. This is always done in a way that protects the identity of the individual, or if this is not possible or appropriate, with express permission.

Personal information received via feedback and complaints is not used for any other purpose unless the use and/or disclosure of personal information is authorised or permitted by the Australian Privacy Principles or any other law, such as where an individual faces a serious threat of harm.

Receiving Feedback and Complaints

Feedback and complaints can be received in a number of ways. An individual may:

- speak directly with any **yourtown** employee, who will enter the feedback on the Quality Improvement System
- complete an online Feedback form via the Feedback link on the **yourtown** or Helpline websites.
- write to:
yourtown
GPO Box 2469
BRISBANE QLD 4001
- participate in a client satisfaction survey or program evaluation facilitated by **yourtown**.

Feedback received by other mechanisms ie. social media and those made to Board Members will be directed to a staff member and recorded in our Quality Improvement System (QIS) for appropriate consideration.

Subject to privacy considerations and any formal protocol in place, a **yourtown** service partner may provide us with information about feedback or complaints received from **yourtown** serviced clients.

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Responding to Anonymous Feedback and the Use of Pseudonyms

Anyone providing feedback or making a complaint is entitled to remain anonymous or use a pseudonym if they so choose. In such cases, **yourtown** will endeavour to act on the feedback or resolve the complaint, but may be limited in what action it can take in investigating and/or acting upon the matter given the particular circumstances.

Providing Assistance

If requested, **yourtown** will assist an individual to provide feedback or lodge a complaint by:

- guiding the individual to the Feedback link on the **yourtown** website.
- entering their feedback or complaint into our Quality Improvement System (QIS) on their behalf.
- providing on-going support throughout the feedback or complaint resolution process to the individual and relevant personnel.

yourtown can also assist if an interpreter is required.

An individual providing feedback or making a complaint may appoint an external party to advocate on their behalf.

Responding to Feedback and Complaints

yourtown treats all feedback seriously and investigates and responds to all feedback and complaints received.

yourtown will treat any individual providing feedback or making a complaint with dignity and respect, and treats all information provided as confidential in accordance with our corporate values, *Consumer Rights Position Statement*, *Privacy Policy*, and *Records Management Policy*.

Only authorised personnel are able to access and handle feedback, complaints, and related personal information.

If feedback or a complaint concerns a third-party, such as another service provider or agency, **yourtown** will assist the individual to provide feedback directly to that party.

As applicable, **yourtown** complies with all response timeframes agreed to or required by funding bodies and service partners, and works with such organisations to address and resolve complaints that are subject to these requirements.

Managing Complaints

In receiving a complaint, **yourtown**:

- enters the complaint into QIS (if not entered directly by the complainant).
- (as appropriate) contacts the individual to confirm:
 - the details of the matter.
 - the individual's expectations, including information to be provided upon resolution of the matter.
 - the resolution process and any additional support available or required.
 - the name and contact details of a **yourtown** contact person.
- investigates the issue raised as quickly as possible to decide on any actions or improvements that may be required. This will usually be undertaken by the supervisor or the manager of the relevant program or service (or where appropriate, an alternate investigator appointed by the relevant yourHead or Chief Executive Officer).
- advises relevant government departments and/or external agencies where a specific reporting requirement exists.

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- responds to the individual about the outcome of the investigation as quickly as possible and no later than fifteen (15) business days after lodgement. If the matter cannot be resolved within this time, **yourtown** will advise the individual of the reasons for the delay and provide a revised timeframe
- ensures appropriate records and case notes are maintained in accordance with **yourtown** policies and procedures, any applicable program or contractual requirements, and applicable Privacy legislation. If applicable, we may need to provide information about the complaint and/or its resolution to a service partner or funding body in accordance with a formal protocol.

In receiving other types of feedback, **yourtown** acknowledges the receipt of the feedback with an appropriate expression of appreciation and response.

Providing Services to those Providing Feedback and Making Complaints

We strive to maintain the highest level of service to all our clients and supporters, regardless of the circumstances. To this end, **yourtown** handles feedback and complaints from stakeholders in a fair and just manner.

No individual will be disadvantaged in any way if they provide feedback or make a complaint about **yourtown**. **yourtown** encourages anyone who feels they have been disadvantaged in this way to raise the matter directly with the manager of the relevant service or program.

Appeals

Internal Appeal

If an individual is not satisfied with **yourtown's** response to their feedback or complaint, they may write to the Chief Executive Officer at:

yourtown
GPO Box 2469
BRISBANE QLD 4001

The Chief Executive Officer will respond within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written request.

External Review

If the individual is still not satisfied with **yourtown's** response:

- The individual may seek an external review by an alternative dispute resolution service. A list of independent mediators who may be able to assist with resolving a dispute can be accessed at this link: <https://www.yourtown.com.au/sites/default/files/document/GDL-1262%20%20Independent%20Mediators%20List.pdf>
- yourtown** may participate in an alternative dispute resolution process providing all parties agree to be bound by a confidentiality agreement.
- Where applicable, an individual may lodge a concern with the relevant government funding body. For example, an unresolved complaint about Kids Helpline in Queensland can be escalated to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women via this link: <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/contact-us/compliments-complaints>.

Responsibilities

Departmental Heads are responsible for ensuring feedback and complaints are investigated, actioned and closed in a timely and effective manner, and in accordance with any agreed or required timeframe.

For the effective and efficient functioning of QIS, Departmental Heads or their delegates are assigned the role of Owner. Other appropriate personnel are assigned to the roles of Gatekeepers, Investigators, and Reporters.

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Approved by: Chief Executive Officer

Owner: Business Systems

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All personnel are responsible for:

- assisting an individual to lodge feedback or a complaint, whenever requested.
- participating in feedback or complaint processes, as requested or assigned.
- maintaining appropriate records relating to feedback and complaints.

Training and Awareness

yourtown ensures all personnel with complaint management responsibilities are aware of and understand feedback and complaints resolution processes, and that all personnel understand how they can support individuals to submit feedback and complaints.

Where information from received feedback and/or complaints is used for training purposes, any related personal information will be de-identified to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned.

Referenced Documents

- Consumer Rights Position Statement
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Duty of Care Position Statement/Procedures/Guide
- Quality Improvement System (QIS) Process Information Sheet
- Feedback links and forms on the **yourtown** and Helpline websites

Related Documents

- Feedback and Continuous Improvement Position Statement
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk System Procedure
- Privacy Notices - various
- Program-specific client information handbooks and equivalent documents.

External

- Australian Privacy Principles Guidelines: Privacy Act 1988 (OAIC, 2014)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and associated Australian Privacy Principles
- Relevant State/Territory Privacy Legislation - various