



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

MultiLink Community Services Inc.
38 Blackwood Road,
Logan Central 4114.
PO Box 146, Woodridge 4114.
Telephone: (07) 3808 4463
Fax: (07) 3808 6337
Email: reception@multilink.org.au
ABN 21728003819

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE STATEMENT

MultiLink Community Services Inc. is committed to delivering quality consumer services. The principles of accountability, responsiveness and procedural fairness are central to the provision of quality, consumer focused services. Issues in service provision can occur and MultiLink ensures that people can raise their concerns in a constructive and safe way.

Complaints serve an important purpose as they help us immediately improve or identify opportunities to improve services and quality of care to consumers. Effective complaint management seeks to improve our communication and working relationships with consumers and assists the development of strategies for continuous improvement.

APPLICATION

Where another MultiLink policy or procedure provides a complaints or review process that is applicable, this Policy will not apply.

OBJECTIVE

a)

MultiLink's complaints management system is based on the fundamental principles of: visibility and access, confidentiality, responsiveness, assessment and action, feedback and monitoring effectiveness.

To give effect to these principles, MultiLink will:

a. Visibility and Access

- i. provide simple, flexible and accessible avenues for staff, clients and the community to lodge complaints;
- ii. communicate to staff, clients and the community on how to access the MultiLink's complaints processes;
- iii. where possible, help complainants who may need assistance with lodging a complaint.

b. Confidentiality

- i. treat all complaints confidentially and protect personal information of the complainant in accordance with its [Privacy Policy](#)

c. Responsiveness

- i. ensure that complaints management training is provided to staff responsible for receiving, processing and/or responding to complaints;
- ii. acknowledge and respond to complaints in a timely manner;
- iii. manage and deal with complaints as soon as practicable and, where appropriate, promptly communicate the outcomes to the complainants.

d. Assessment and Action

- i. handle complaints fairly, remain impartial and appropriately adhere to principles of natural justice and good governance;
- ii. deal with complaints and complainants respectfully, professionally and in accordance with this Policy and its accompanying procedures.
- iii. Adhere to MultiLink's Complaint Investigation Procedure

e. Feedback

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- i. communicate with complainants in a timely manner about the management and progress of their complaint;
- ii. where possible and appropriate, inform the complainant of the factors considered in arriving at an outcome and the reasons for the outcome;
- iii. communicate to the complainant about the complainant's right to any internal and/or external review of a decision made by MultiLink about their complaint.

f. Monitoring Effectiveness

- i. meet its statutory and legislative requirements to report certain complaints to relevant reporting agencies;
- ii. monitor complaint trends and identify and promptly address any systemic issues;
- iii. continue to review its complaints management processes to ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, confidentially, efficiently and in a timely manner.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure apply to all:

- a) clients, staff members (including contracted agency staff) and volunteers; and
- b) complaints made by a consumer, their representatives, staff members and other relevant stakeholders receiving services through MultiLink.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO, Senior Management team (and other delegated officers) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

MultiLink will:

- a) record, respond and investigate as appropriate all complaints made regarding our services/operations;
- b) deal with every complaint fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution;
- c) provide all reasonable information on our Complaints Management Policy and Procedure to all consumers, staff members and other relevant stakeholders;
- d) provide all reasonable information to consumers, staff members and other relevant stakeholders on other mechanisms available to address complaints including external authorities and organisations; and
- e) co-operate with and assist external authorities and organisations in the investigation of a complaint.

PROCEDURE

Provision of information

When a consumer commences receiving services, MultiLink will provide them with all reasonable information regarding the Complaints Management Policy and Procedure.

This information will include:

- a) contact details of staff members to whom a complaint can be made;
- b) access to advocacy (including the right to a support person); and
- c) mechanisms for raising external complaints.

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WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service offered or provided by MultiLink or the conduct of its staff (including volunteers) and contractors whether voiced by a member within the community, staff or a student.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Management

Senior Management are responsible within their organisational area to ensure staff are aware of MultiLink's policy and procedures on complaints management and encourage the prompt and fair management of complaints in accordance with this Policy.

Evaluation and Review Committee

ERC will review the Complaints Register at monthly meetings to monitor for timeliness of response; trends; and whether the outcomes on closed complaints meet expectations. ERC may recommend additional action items where appropriate, or may note the complaints for closure. The CEO will review the final complaint form for final closure.

As part of the evaluation, our consumers, their representatives, and staff members may be asked to complete a survey which could include:

- a) their awareness of the Complaints Management Policy and Procedure;
- b) their satisfaction with our response to their complaint; and
- c) their recommendations or suggestions for improvement.

All Staff

Staff will endeavour to provide assistance to a person wishing to make a complaint and guide them to the correct policy or procedures for their particular issue, including how they can make a complaint.

Human Resources

The HR team is responsible for the implementation (including providing training and increasing awareness).

PART B - REPORTING OF COMPLAINTS

Local Level

In the first instance, and where possible and appropriate, complainants are encouraged to raise their complaint at the local level, such as a supervisor/ program facilitator. Wherever possible, MultiLink will manage and resolve complaints at the local level.

Complaints can either be made in writing or verbally.

Escalation under Relevant Policy

If the complaint cannot be resolved or is not suitable for resolution at the local level, the complaint may be escalated under the relevant policy by either the complainant or the person who received the complaint.

The relevant policy will be as follows:

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Type of Complaint	Relevant Policy
Staff grievance For staff in relation to issues affecting their employment with MultiLink.	03.00.0015 Personal Grievance Policy or 03.00.0030 Grievance Handling Policy
Discrimination and harassment For all persons: staff in relation to matters of discrimination and non-sexual harassment.	03.00.0030 Grievance Handling Policy
Client or Community Complaint Where a client expresses dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided (including but not limited to interactions with MultiLink personnel, allegations of privacy breaches, dissatisfaction around timeliness, consistency or reliability).	This policy + Internal Client Complaint Investigation Form

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

MultiLink accepts complaints can be made anonymously and will take reasonable measures to address them. However it is important that a complainant understands that this may have an impact on how effectively MultiLink can deal with the complaint.

There are difficulties in investigating anonymous complaints because the MultiLink is unable to seek clarification of the complaint or additional information about the complaint.

This includes the ability to gather further information from the complainant, provide natural justice to those subject to the complaint and, where appropriate, update the complainant on how the complaint was dealt with.

ASSESS AND ACTION COMPLAINTS

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the policy and procedures relevant to the type of complaint.

In accordance with, but subject to the policy and procedures relevant to the type of complaint, the relevant unit assigned to deal with the complaint will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as practicable;
- undertake an assessment of the complaint, which may include contacting the complainant for further information;
- be fair, reasonable and objective during their assessment and resolution of the complaint;
- treat complaints confidentially in accordance with the requirements of the policy;
- treat anonymous complaints on their merits;
- gather and consider any relevant material prior to making a decision;
- resolve complaints in a timely manner and where possible at the local level; and
- seek advice from relevant senior staff and organisational units as required.

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Support for Complainants

Where possible MultiLink will endeavour to provide appropriate support to the complainant whilst dealing with their complaint. This may also involve providing reasonable assistance after a complaint has been resolved.

Staff are encouraged to access MultiLink's [Employee Assistance Program](#) for confidential and professional counselling and assistance.

PROTECTION FOR COMPLAINANTS

We are committed to protecting and respecting the rights of a complainant who makes a complaint in good faith.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no complainant is subject to:

- a) reprisal;
- b) demotion;
- c) victimisation; or
- d) discriminatory treatment.

However, making a complaint will not necessarily shield the complainant from the consequences flowing from the involvement in the conduct itself. At our discretion, we may provide the complainant with immunity from organisational disciplinary proceedings. We have no power to provide immunity from criminal prosecution.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be maintained at all stages of the complaint investigation. Communication is limited to those people who need to be informed in order to resolve and action the complaint or as required by law.

RECORD KEEPING

We will maintain and store all records of the complaint, processes for handling the complaint, actions taken and the outcome. All complaints will be uploaded to the Complaints and Compliments Register maintained on the ACCPA Quality Portal.

The following are examples of details about the complaint that should be kept:

- a) date complaint received;
- b) nature of complaint;
- c) actions resulting from complaint/decisions made; and
- d) complainant and person who recorded complaint (if different).

EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

To the extent required by law, we will cooperate and assist with any investigation conducted by external agencies. We will report any complaints in an accurate and timely manner to external authorities as required by law and/or in accordance with our internal policies and procedures.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth);*
- *Aged Care Act 2024 (Cth);*
- *Aged Care Principles (Cth);*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*
- *Aged Care Quality Standards (Cth)*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards (Cth)*
- *Human Services Quality Framework (QLD).*
- *Complaint Management Flowchart (appended)*
- *Complaints Investigation Form*

MULTILINK CONTACT

Any questions in relation to this Policy should be directed to the Corporate Services Manager.

VARIATIONS

Multilink reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this Policy from time to time.

VERSION AND REVISION INFORMATION

Policy authorised by:	Chief Executive Officer
Policy maintained by:	Corporate Services Manager
Approved by:	Management Committee
Approval date:	Pending - September 2025
Version:	V7

