

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Interchange Outer East actively supports a family's or participant's right to complain about any aspect of a service Interchange Outer East provides.

Interchange considers a complaint to have occurred when:

A family, participant, or their advocate, tells us that they are unhappy or dissatisfied with:

- A decision made
- The services provided
- The environment in which a service has been provided
- The way a services is provided
- The staff/volunteers who work in an Interchange program

And

- The family or participant wishes Interchange to acknowledge and respond to their complaint.

All complaints about Interchange will be dealt with promptly, fairly, confidentially and without retribution. Interchange complaints procedure will give families or participants access to a fair and equitable process for dealing with complaints and disputes.

On receiving a complaint, the coordinator or staff member will reassure the family or participant that they will receive no retribution for making a complaint. The coordinator or staff member will also reaffirm how seriously complaints and their resolution are taken by Interchange.

When a complaint is received, the staff member who first receives the complaint will determine whether the complaint is serious or routine using the following criteria:

Serious Complaints Involve:

- Staff or volunteer misconduct
- An alleged breach of:
 - The right of a family or participant
 - Duty of care
 - family/participant /staff safety
 - Privacy and confidentiality
- An alleged incident of harassment

Routine Complaints:

- Operational issues involving:

- Activities
- Transport arrangements
- Lost or damaged property

If a volunteer receives a complaint they should refer the matter to their immediate supervisor. The supervisor should determine the level of the complaint and document the complaint.

Serious Complaints

The Program Team Leader, or General Manager of Interchange, will be informed of all serious complaints within 24 hours. The program Team Leader will contact the family or participant verbally within 24 hours of being notified of a serious complaint. The program Team Leader will investigate and document the complaint on an Interchange complaint form. If a written complaint is made, a complaint form does not need to be completed. All documents pertaining to the complaint need to be kept and filed in the complaints register in lieu of the complaint form. After attempting to resolve the complaint with the family or participant, the program Team Leader will write to them outlining any decisions reached and/or any actions Interchange has taken, or will take, in response to the complaint. This written notification will occur within 10 working days of the complaint being documented. If the family or participant is dissatisfied with the way Interchange has responded they will be reminded that they are entitled to take the matter further, as per the grievance procedure.

All complaint forms or documentation regarding a complaint will be kept in a complaints register, which will be held by the General Manager of Interchange.

Minor Complaints

The staff member receiving the complaint will acknowledge the complaint verbally and attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the family or participant. If any policy or operational changes are required the staff member will discuss the matter with the program Team Leader. If the family or participant is dissatisfied with the way Interchange has responded, they will be reminded that they are entitled to take the matter further, as per the grievance procedure.

When a complaint is received, the staff member to whom the initial complaint is made will fill out a consumer complaint form. If a written complaint is made, a complaint form does not need to be completed. All documents pertaining to the complaint need to be kept and filed in the complaints register in lieu of the complaint form.

All complaint forms or documentation regarding a complaint will be kept in a complaints register, which will be held by the General Manager of Interchange.

The General Manager will review the complaints register every 3 months to ensure that complaints have been responded to promptly, fairly and appropriately and that appropriate policy and procedural changes have been made. The register will be used to monitor a family or participant dissatisfaction with Interchange Outer East services and Interchange's

ability to use details of complaints and grievances to ensure programs are responsive to meet participant and families needs.

Complaints Regarding Purchased Services

When a complaint or concern is raised regarding a family or participant who receives services purchased by an external agency, the agency/case manager will be notified. If the complaint is a minor the agency/case manager should be notified within 5 working days. Where the complaint or concern regards the safety and wellbeing of participants and family members it must be reported to the purchasing agency/case manager immediately. In circumstances where there is no case management the concern must be immediately reported to the appropriate Coordinator/Team Leader to determine the necessary course of action.

Interchange Grievance Procedure

All participants and families in Interchange Outer East have a right to have any grievance dealt with, fairly, promptly and without prejudice. The grievance system aims to ensure that the parties involved can resolve their grievance through negotiation and discussion. The use of advocates in a grievance process is welcomed and supported by Interchange Outer East.

When individuals/families are unsatisfied with a response or decision made to a complaint they can take the matter further.



As indicated in the chart if the individual or family is not satisfied with the response or action taken by Interchange employees an appropriate body or organisation outside of Interchange Outer East (acceptable to both parties) will be approached to mediate to resolve the complaint / grievance.

All grievances are to be recorded on the complaints register. The register will be used as a tool to monitor clients' dissatisfaction of services and Interchanges ability to use details of complaints and grievances to ensure programs are evolving to meet participant and families needs. Any written correspondence about the grievance is to be filed in the complaints folder.