



## Feedback and Complaints Policy



I feel welcome and encouraged to give feedback whether negative or positive.

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Nāku tē rourou nau tē rourou ka ora ai tē iwi.

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With your basket and my basket the people will thrive

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### Intent

We resolve complaints carefully and promptly and encourage and learn from the feedback we receive.

We ensure those we work with understand their right to complain and focus on early resolution of concerns. We respect complainants' privacy and their right to be treated with dignity. We deal with complaints equitably, fairly and in an unbiased way.

This policy applies to complaints and feedback about our activities/services. For help with a conflict or dispute at staff level see [here](#). For help with a conflict or dispute at the board level see [here](#).



## Definitions

"Complainant" is a person who makes a complaint.

A "complaint" is feedback expressing dissatisfaction with the standard, type or way in which a service is provided, or not provided, changed or withdrawn. It may be a complaint about a breach of privacy.

"Feedback" is information about a personal/whānau experience or reaction to our service. It includes suggestions and compliments.

"Privacy officer" is a role that is performed by the manager or a delegated staff member. See [here](#) for their role and functions.

"Stakeholders" refers to external people and agencies that have a stake/interest in our organisation.

## Responsibilities

**The board will:**

- promote a culture that encourages, responds and learns from feedback and complaints
- support follow up on systemic issues identified through complaints.

**Management will:**

- lead a culture that is positive about and learns from feedback and complaints
- manage feedback and complaints processes and delegate responsibility for receiving and responding to them
- ensure kaimahi have skills and training to adequately support use of the feedback and complaints process



- report to the board about the feedback and complaints.

**Kaimahi/volunteers will:**

- when necessary, support or arrange support for people wanting to make a complaint or give feedback
- engage in reflective and responsive practice
- cooperate in the investigation of complaints.

## Principles for complaints resolution

These principles must be applied when dealing with complaints:

**Early resolution** - complaints will be addressed in an early and timely way to prevent undue escalation and deterioration of relationships. Ideally, complaints are addressed as they are raised.

**Open and transparent** - we advise complainants of the process, expected time frames for the process, their likely involvement and possible or likely outcomes. We are clear about what can and can't be done and pass on complaints about other organisations to them with the complainant's consent.

**Respect** - complaints must be promptly acknowledged. We listen to the parties and respect their views. We safeguard the privacy of the parties and the process.

**Protection of rights** - parties to the complaint must be advised of their rights and given the information they need to exercise those rights including rights to:

- participate in the process
- access support and advocacy
- a fair and impartial investigation and decision



- not be adversely treated for making a complaint.

**Information** - the parties must be kept informed through the process and given reasons for the decision on the complaint. The information must be provided in a way that is understandable to each party having regard to that person's age, level of understanding, language and culture needs, abilities. Personal information will only be shared when allowed by the law and policy.

**Support** - parties are encouraged to access support and advocacy throughout the complaints process (eg whanaunga, kaumātua, Kuia, Health and Disability Commissioner, Disability support, union representation, community law centre, VOYCE for rangatahi in care, Office of the Children's Commissioner).

## Requirements

### Complaint-friendly culture

A positive approach to feedback and complaints will be promoted:

- rangatahi/whānau are informed about our feedback and complaints processes in different ways
- feedback is routinely sought and received in our mahi
- we reply to feedback and complaints we receive.

### Accessible processes

Different avenues are provided to give feedback and make complaints, for example:

- rangatahi/whānau and other stakeholders are encouraged to raise issues with kaimahi as they arise



- we regularly ask for feedback from those we are working with
- we inform rangatahi/whānau about external and independent complaint and advocacy mechanisms (eg Human Rights Commission, Officer of the Privacy Commissioner, Health and Disability Commissioner, Commissioner for Children)
- we may have specifically designated kaimahi to deal with complaints, including privacy complaints.

### **Facilitate support and assistance**

Support will be provided to people wanting to give feedback or make a complaint. It must be appropriate to their needs and wishes (eg developmentally appropriate for a rangatahi; culturally appropriate).

When making a complaint, complainants will be encouraged to provide full details along with any relevant documentation eg names of people, a timeline of events.

If a complainant nominates a person to represent them with their complaint, communication will be with their representative.

### **Manage “unreasonable” complaints**

Complaints will be addressed with integrity and good faith. However, a complaint will not be progressed if it is vexatious, abusive or otherwise unreasonable. Management will advise the complainant and other parties of any decision to this effect.

### **Use the complaints process**

The complaints process will be used for dealing with a complaint unless otherwise specified by management or the board. If a complaint alleges gross misconduct by a kaimahi/team member, the [Responding to allegations](#)



against team members policy will be applied. Arrangements will be made, if necessary, to safeguard the complainant and any other person potentially at risk.

Complaints will usually be in writing unless otherwise agreed. If a verbal complaint is made to a kaimahi, it must be recorded and forwarded to management or their delegate in a timely way.

The Social Media policy will be applied to feedback and complaints made through social media channels.

### **Follow up**

Feedback and complaints we receive will be recorded, for example:

- a complaints and feedback register, or
- a complaint about risk - in the risk register, or
- a complaint about an adverse incident - in the Incident/accident register.

Feedback should be passed on to those it concerns and a response given to the person who gave the feedback.

### **Review**

Feedback should be obtained about how a complaint was handled. If a party is not satisfied with the complaint process, they will be advised of their right to:

- seek an internal review of the process by someone not involved in the complaint, or
- ask for the complaint to be referred to and reconsidered by the higher management (eg board).



- If they are not satisfied with the internal review process, they can complain to an external body, for example:
  - Health and Disability Commissioner
  - the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (if the complaint concerns privacy); phone 0800 803 909 Monday to Friday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm)
  - a relevant professional membership organisation (ie one to which our staff belong)
  - the funding/purchasing agency.

## Supporting documents

For our approach to feedback see [here](#).

The complaints form should be used for making a complaint.

## Compliance

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Level 2, Client-centred services 1.1, 1.4; Resolution of complaints related to service provision; Community wellbeing 1.0

Social Sector Accreditation Standards Levels 3& 4, Resolution of complaints related to service provision 1.0

NZS 8134:2021 Our Rights, Criterion 1.8

Privacy Act 2020

Health Information Privacy Code 2020

Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights, Right 10

## Helpful links



Complaints process

Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights

Participation

Quality improvement

Review

Date: January 2022

Next review: December 2023