

Policy name and Identifier Code	<i>Complaints & Feedback Policy - QM3.0</i>
Version	<i>V5</i>
Document prepared by	<i>Program Manager</i>
Responsibility	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
Date of Currency	<i>March 2022</i>
Date of next review	<i>April 2024 or following a change in related regulation or guidelines or a reportable incident</i>
Relevant standards	<i>NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – July 2019 NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators – Nov 2021</i>

Our Vision

The Inclusion Foundation is a for-purpose-charity that champions the inclusion of people with Down syndrome. We see an inclusive world where people with Down syndrome are equal, active and respected members of society. Together, we stand proud, we raise our hands in the air, and we say to society, to business, to governments, to everyone, and to anyone... Count me in!

Purpose

- Ensure that there is a procedure that participants, volunteers, contractors and members of the community, can communicate any complaints or feedback regarding Inclusion Foundation services, functions and/or operations
- Enable Inclusion Foundation to grow and benefit from all complaints and feedback through ensuring that the complaints or feedback are recorded, considered, resolved if necessary and monitored
- Establish the guiding principles that are to govern Inclusion Foundation’s response to complaints
- Ensure that our people and our clients (our community) are aware of the content of this policy and the relevant procedure.

Related Policy	Forms
Quality Management System Framework QM 1.0	Complaints Register QM 3.3
Advocacy SD 1.0	Feedback form (website)

Policy

Inclusion Foundation is committed to being open and responsive to any complaints or feedback offered by participants, their families, support workers, volunteers, our people or by members of the community. Inclusion Foundation will at all times seek an outcome to a complaint which is satisfactory to all parties. Regardless of whether it is a big or small issue, we aim to treat it seriously, demonstrating that all input is valued to improve the services we offer.

The Complaints management system will ensure that all complaints are responded to in a timely and impartial manner by:

- ensuring that all suggestions for improvements and complaints are recorded, considered and retained for process improvement purposes
- encouraging participants, key support people, volunteers, (our people), and members of

the community who have a complaint in relation to Inclusion Foundation services, or any actions/behaviours of a staff member or a volunteer, to express this through the formal complaints procedure

- ensuring that the complainant is informed of their right to have a support person or advocate present to assist or represent them during the formal complaint procedure
- Accepting formal complaints in either written or verbal form. If verbal, the assisting staff member will support the participant to complete the online feedback form to ensure this is registered in the complaints management system
- addressing all complaints in a confidential manner. Only the people directly involved in making, investigating or resolving a complaint will have access to information about it. Where the complainant is a participant, only information relevant to any change in service to be delivered will be documented in the individual's file if required to ensure thorough follow through
- ensuring that the complaint investigation process is impartial. No assumptions will be made, or any action taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered
- ensuring that any complaint is free of repercussions or reprisal for the complainant. Management will take all necessary steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs against any individual that makes a complaint

All complaints will be recorded in the complaints register and held in the information management system for 7 years.

Procedure

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has overall responsibility for this procedure. However, all staff are responsible for recording complaints when required, in accordance with this procedure.

Inclusion Foundation invites individuals to submit feedback and complaints regarding any aspect of our operations and can do this via the feedback form on the Inclusion Foundation website or verbally to a member of the team and they will assist document the complain if requested.

All staff members, contractors and volunteers must be aware of this procedures and the complainant's right to the use of an advocate and their right to take their complaint to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, *all details on the Inclusion Foundation website Feedback Form.* <https://inclusionfoundation.org.au/feedback-form/>

The relevant Program Manager, (Artistic Director or Impact21 Program Manager) are the main point to which complaints should be directed, however, complaints may be received by any staff member of Inclusion Foundation.

It is anticipated that most complaints raised by participants will be resolved informally between the participant and team member involved. If a satisfactory resolution fails to be reached, the following procedure applies:

1. As soon as possible after the receipt of either a verbal or written complaint (in person or via email) request the complainant to complete the website feedback form. If the complainant is unable to complete this website form (or does not wish to but wants to proceed with the complaint) the staff member, teacher or volunteer is to assist or is to listen and take notes (if complaint is verbal)
2. Once the complaint is received, the relevant Program Manager will log the complaint in the Complaint Register and action to resolve will commence within 2 working days of complaint being received. This commences with:
 - contacting the complainant advising them of the process to be undertaken
 - listening to the complainant to better understand their concern
 - discussing the complaints resolution process to assist understanding of what will occur
 - advising of their right to use an advocate and how to access and advocate
 - advising of their right to lodge a complaint directly with the NDIS Commission and how/offering to send them a link to the NDIS Commission website
 - keeping record of the date/actions taken – this could form evidence if the complaint is not resolved.
3. The Program Manager will inform the CEO of all complaints progressing to a formal complaint and keep them informed of the actions undertaken or recommended to resolve the matter.
 - The Program Manager may need to undertake an investigation to better understand the issues, identify the root cause of the issue, and to determine the resolution.
4. A satisfactory course of action will be agreed between the Program Director and the complainant. Once resolved, an email is to be sent to the complainant outlining the agreed resolution and recorded in the Complaints register.
5. The complaints register is reviewed at the Quality Management monthly meeting to determine if there are any systematic issues that can be addressed or unresolved complaints that need to be referred to the CEO.

The complainant should be informed of his or her right to have a support person or advocate present to assist or represent them during this process.

A list of funded advocacy services can be found here:

<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability-advocacy-organisations>

or through the <https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/>

VALID – <https://www.valid.org.au>

The Program Manager will offer to support the person to connect with the advocacy group of their choice.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the Program Manager, the individual may wish to escalate directly to the CEO and / or approach the NDIS Commission, authorised to manage complaints related to NDIS services.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Pone: 1800 035 544

online: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au>

The CEO will report the matter to the FARM committee and Board in line with the governance requirements.

Document history				
Location of Master - 2022 Complaints & Feedback Policy & Procedure.docx				
Review Date	Version	Reviewed by	Endorsed	Notes
May 2017	V1	CEO	CEO	
June 2017	V2	NDIS Project Officer	CEO	
Feb 2018	V3	NDIS/DHHS PO	CEO	Reviewed, no change
June 2020	V4	Program Director	CEO & FARM Chair	Made inclusive of Impact21 Updated the vision statement Made current with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission registration requirements and NDIS Practice Standards 2020 V3
March 2022	V5	SS Manager	CEO	Updated branding and organisation name to Inclusion Foundation Updated the vision statement Updated dates to most current legislature
Approved for Publishing by CEO, Cate Sayers			Date:	Signature: