

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Purpose:

The objective of this policy is to assist Murray PHN and employees in handling feedback and resolving complaints in an efficient, effective and professional manner. It is also to provide external stakeholders with the means of providing feedback and complaints, via email to feedback@murrayphn.org.au

Background:

Murray PHN is accountable for all of the services provided by our organisation or through our contractors. Feedback provides valuable validation of the services and needs to be encouraged. Compliments, complaints and suggestions must be managed effectively to ensure they lead to business improvement. This document describes the principles of our feedback process.

1. Quality improvement

Complaints management is an integral part of the quality improvement approach of Murray PHN.

2. Open disclosure

Murray PHN adopts an open disclosure approach in relation to complaints.

3. Commitment

Murray PHN is fully committed to an integrated feedback management system and will provide the necessary support for it to operate effectively.

4. Accessibility

Murray PHN encourages consumers and stakeholders to give feedback about services and initiatives and makes it easy for them to do so.

5. Responsiveness

Murray PHN has a consumer/stakeholder focussed approach, being receptive to complaints and treating complaints seriously. All complainants are treated with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality. All complaints are handled without prejudice or assumptions about how minor or serious they are. The emphasis is on resolving the problem.

6. Transparency and accountability

The complaints process is clearly articulated, open and accountable.

7. Privacy and confidentiality

Murray PHN respects the privacy and confidentiality of clients and the information received during the complaints process, while at the same time making its decisions open and accountable. Consumers and their families can make complaints on a confidential basis or anonymously if they wish, and be assured that their identity will be protected.

Procedure:

Feedback in the form of compliments, complaints or suggestions can come from a variety of sources. Consumers, stakeholders and the general public are actively encouraged to provide us with feedback and appropriate channels are made available through social media, the Murray PHN website, email, telephone and through submission of feedback forms which are distributed through our services and through our contractors.

Definitions:

Feedback

We define feedback as receipt of communication from an individual of a service provided by Murray PHN.

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected (AS ISO 10002-2006). Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.

Compliment

An expression of praise, commendation or admiration made to an organisation, related to its products or processes.

Complaints officer

The person with overall responsibility for receiving, recording, referring and reporting on complaints across Murray PHN.

Open disclosure

A process for communication following unexpected healthcare outcomes and harm.

Incident or accident

An undesirable or unfortunate event that occurs unintentionally and usually results in harm, injury, damage, or loss; casualty; mishap.

Suggestion

An idea for improvement or innovation to a process or service. Action is not explicitly or implicitly expected in relation to the issue(s) raised.

Receiving and handling feedback

The Murray PHN representative receiving the feedback:

- Makes an initial assessment whether that feedback can be acknowledged and resolved immediately, or whether it needs to be escalated for investigation and resolution.
- If the feedback relates to an issue which:
 - a. is minor in nature and
 - b. affects only the local operation with no effect on any other location or program and
 - c. is resolvable, or no action is required

The person receiving the feedback should acknowledge the feedback, and take appropriate action at the local level to resolve.

If the feedback is a complaint, it is forwarded to the Complaints Officer, usually by email to feedback@murrayphn.org.au

Recording, acknowledging and referring a complaint

On receiving a complaint, the Complaints Officer will:

- Record the details onto the complaints register
- Determine the most appropriate person to investigate and resolve the complaint (the “investigation officer”).
- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant and the person receiving the feedback, advising the name and title of the person handling the investigation and note there will be an update within seven days.

Investigating and resolving a complaint

The Investigation Officer will then:

- Thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the complaint, recording and maintaining appropriate documentation throughout the process.
- Interview employees or others if necessary to determine the sequence of events, while maintaining confidentiality as far as practicable, limiting details of the complainant and the circumstances of the matter only to those who ‘need to know’.
- Keep the complainant informed of progress or the investigation’s finding, initially with seven days of receipt of the complaint, and then as agreed with the complainant.
- Notify the complainant of the finding of the investigation
- Notify the Complaints Officer of the investigation’s findings for recording and closure

The finding of the investigation may indicate a change to existing policies, procedures, performance or protocols, which would be referred to the relevant Executive Director for consideration and action.

Reporting and monitoring complaint activity

At least four times each year, the Complaints Officer will analyse the complaints register to provide summary reports of complaints received, their categories and their resolution.

The Executive Team is responsible for using the reports generated from this policy to critically review policies, procedures and protocols, update the risk register as appropriate and oversee the changes necessary to reduce complaints, incidents and adverse outcomes, thereby improving the quality of our services.

The Quality Subcommittee receives and review regular reports on progress against quality indicators, to develop a strong culture of continuous improvement within Murray PHN and provide oversight of the complaints, feedback and satisfaction processes of the organisation.

The Board, as part of its governance responsibilities, receives reports and recommendations from the Quality subcommittee on quality, safety and risk.