



VIVID

Compliments and Complaints Policy

POLICY:

Vivid is committed to being an organisation which is responsive, and sensitive, to the needs and concerns of the people it supports, provides services to and interacts with.

Vivid encourages individuals to raise, in confidence and without fear of retribution, complaints - as well as compliments and other feedback - (collectively referred to in this Policy as "Feedback") they have about Vivid.

Feedback that is recorded and handled effectively will provide valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, a consistent approach for resolution of complaints, reduce the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

SCOPE:

This Policy, and the following procedures, apply to any person (including, but not limited to, any client, parent, carer, advocate, staff member or student) wanting to submit a compliment, complaint or feedback about any element of Vivid's services.

DEFINITIONS:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that arises out of the provision of a service for which a response or resolution is explicitly, or implicitly, expected.

A compliment is an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude about a service. It may be about an individual staff member, a team or the organisation.

An appeal is where a decision arising from a complaint, is disputed.

PROCEDURES:

1. Providing Vivid with Feedback.
 - 1.1 Any person (including, but not limited to, any client, parent, carer, advocate, staff member or student) may provide Feedback to Vivid about their experiences with services delivered by Vivid.
 - 1.2 Feedback can be submitted in a number of ways, including (but not limited to):

- 1.2.1 Verbally to a senior manager, Executive Manager or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO);
 - 1.2.2 In writing, addressed to the CEO at Vivid, PO Box 1, Echuca 3564, by email (scott.alexander@wearevivid.org.au) or by telephoning the CEO on 5480 6611;
 - 1.2.3 By completing (and sending to the postal address or email address referred to in Clause 1.2.2) a [Compliments and Complaints Form](#), copies of which are located in the reception area at each Vivid site or via the Vivid website. A copy of this Policy is available at www.wearevivid.org.au
- 1.3 Vivid staff who receive Feedback must immediately direct the Feedback to a supervisor, senior manager, Executive Manager or the CEO. If referred to a supervisor, this is to be passed onto a senior manager, Executive Manager or the CEO promptly.
 - 1.4 To assist people Vivid supports to understand their right to submit Feedback, Vivid has a 'Complaints in Easy English' form. This form is available at all Vivid sites. Support Workers must ensure that the people they support know about, and understand, that this form is available for them to use.
 - 1.5 When lodging Feedback, individuals are encouraged to provide details which include:
 - 1.5.1 What happened;
 - 1.5.2 Who was involved;
 - 1.5.3 The date and time it happened;
 - 1.5.4 Whether there was anyone else who saw it happen;
 - 1.5.5 What impact the event has had;
 - 1.5.6 What outcome the individual is seeking.

2. Receiving Feedback

Upon receiving Feedback Vivid staff (Staff) will, depending on the nature of the Feedback and bearing in mind Clause 1.3, respond as follows:

2.1 Acknowledgement:

- 2.1.1 Listen - genuinely listen to the concerns of the person without interruption. Staff must look for the positive intention behind the person's issue and behaviour;
- 2.1.2 Empathise - Staff are to use their body language and/or voice to create an environment where the person can feel comfortable talking to them. Vivid

staff must be conscious of whether they are feeling defensive and how this can be perceived;

2.1.3 Acknowledge - Staff must acknowledge how the situation has affected the person who made the complaint;

2.1.4 Rectify - If the Feedback is a complaint, Staff are to ask the complainant what a good outcome would look like for them;

2.1.5 Notify - In the case of a complaint, notify the complainant of the steps which have been taken, or will be taken, in response to their complaint (without committing to outcomes which Vivid will not be able to deliver).

2.2 Answers:

2.2.1 People want to know why something has or has not happened or why a decision was made. This is important to their ability to understand and process what has happened and to resolve their concerns.

2.2.2 Answers should include details of the event and the decision relevant to the concerns raised.

2.2.3 Answers should also provide information about organisational processes for further information gathering and communication.

2.3 Actions:

2.3.1 People want you to fix or at least take steps to address their concerns.

2.3.2 Sometimes you may not be able to fix the concern raised but you may be able to initiate actions that will assist and preventing it occurring again. This can be just as important to the person as it validates their concern.

2.3.3 It's a good idea to agree to an action plan with the person who raised the complaint. The plan should include things like:

- What will be done?
- Who will do it and when?
- How will we communicate our progress?
- How will we check that things are on track?

2.3.4 It's also a good idea to then follow up with the person who made the complaint to make sure they are satisfied with what action you have taken.

2.4 Apology:

2.4.1 An apology can either be part or the whole of the outcome people seek when they make a complaint.

2.4.2 Careful consideration should be given to whom might give any apology and what form it should take. Whilst a genuine apology can be an important step in resolving the complaint, a poorly given apology can actually make the situation worse.

2.4.3 Some of the key elements of a good apology are:

- Timeliness.
- Sincerity.
- Being specific and to the point.
- Accepting responsibility for what occurred and the impact it has caused.
- Explaining the circumstances and causes (without making excuses).
- Summarising key actions agreed to as a result of the complaint.

2.5 Staff training:

Whilst it is important to have the “four As” (Acknowledgement, Answers, Actions and Apology) as a core element of Vivid’s complaints resolution process, in order for this to be an effective approach it is essential that Staff are supported and trained to develop the range of skills required to provide these types of responses to complaints, and to work through the issues presented in complaints.

3. Recording Feedback

All Feedback will be, depending on the nature of the Feedback, recorded in:

3.1 The Complaints Register – the responsibility for maintaining that Register, and regularly reporting to the Board’s Risk, Audit & Compliance Committee on the status of all registered complaints, rests with the CEO.

3.2 The Compliments Summary Report – the responsibility for maintaining that Report, and regularly reporting to the Board about its contents, rests with the CEO.

4. Responding to Feedback

4.1 Vivid will acknowledge in writing, to any person who submitted Feedback, within five working days of it being received by a senior manager, Executive Manager or the CEO.

- 4.2 Timelines for investigating and endeavouring to resolve Feedback which is a complaint will depend on what is at issue. Vivid will at all times attempt to resolve the complaint within 21 days of the complaint being received by a senior manager or the CEO.
- 4.3 During the time that the complaint is being investigated and dealt with, the person lodging the complaint will be kept informed of its progress.
- 4.4 In cases where a complaint cannot be resolved within 21 days the CEO (or delegate of the CEO) will inform the complainant of the reason for this and the ongoing action being taken to resolve the complaint.
- 4.5 Any complaint in which there are allegations relating to an event or circumstances that occurred during service delivery, or in connection with service delivery, and which resulted in harm to (or had the potential to harm) a client must be dealt with in accordance with the [Incident Management System Policy](#).
- 4.6 If the complaint is about a particular Staff member with direct care and support responsibilities, Vivid will immediately assess whether the Staff member should be suspended, pending resolution of the complaint, from their employment with Vivid.
- 4.7 Any complaint that is related to illegal activity (such as theft and assault) will be immediately referred to the appropriate authority.
- 4.8 Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints/appeals. Vivid seeks to protect the rights and privacy of all involved.

5. Investigation Process

- 5.1 To respond to and resolve a complaint, an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint needs to be conducted by an impartial person/s. The investigation process must be explained to the complainant and:
 - 5.1.1 Be proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint;
 - 5.1.2 Be conducted in a private manner and treated confidentially;
 - 5.1.3 Involve all of the people known to be involved in the matter the complaint is about;
 - 5.1.4 Ask all of the people known to be involved in the matter the complaint what actions/outcomes they are seeking which would resolve the issue;
 - 5.1.5 Any Staff member who is the subject of a complaint must not discuss the complaint with fellow employees, students and/or Clients;
 - 5.1.6 Any Staff member who is the subject of a complaint must be provided with details of the allegations and have the right of reply;

5.1.7 Advise the person to whom the complaint is made that they must not victimise or bother the complainant in any way;

5.1.8 Be fully documented including statement of accounts, dates, times and the names of any witnesses.

5.2 At the conclusion of the investigation the complainant will be promptly informed of the outcome of the investigation.

5.3 Investigations into complaints that identify opportunities where improvements could be made, must be pursued with the submission of an [Opportunity for Improvement Form](#).

5.4 Individuals not satisfied with the process followed to investigate their complaint, and/or the outcome following the investigation, have the right to take the matter to (where their concerns relate to the delivery of services by Vivid) the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints>

6. Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the [Disciplinary Policy](#). This may include informal counselling, warnings or termination of employment.

7. Related Policies and Documents

Other policies and documents which are relevant to the Compliments and Complaints Policy include:

7.1 [Victoria's Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities](#)

Version Control

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