



COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND FEEDBACK

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PURPOSE:

To assist staff, customers and their representatives with the timely and effective management of complaints, compliments and feedback. This policy statement applies to all VNRS staff and subcontractors.

POLICY:

VNRS welcomes feedback. Our aim is to provide great services to people and feedback helps us do that.

Compliments tell us what we're doing right. Complaints tell us what we are not getting right, and we see that as an opportunity to reflect and improve.

All feedback is taken seriously.

There are five key principles that underpin good complaints management:

1. Accessibility – people need to know how to provide feedback and what the process for providing feedback is. Information about the process should be provided to people in accessible formats.
2. A person-centred approach – the process of responding to feedback ensures the perspective of the person making the complaint is considered and people are treated respectfully, courteously and sensitively. This includes treating information confidentially.
3. Responsiveness – feedback and complaints are handled in a timely way and people are kept informed of progress. Staff should be capable of and empowered to respond to complaints quickly and fairly.
4. Accountability – the complaints process is clearly outlined so people know what to expect. This includes informing people of decisions and having a process for review and appeal. The principles of natural justice apply and people should never be adversely affected after raising a complaint.
5. Excellence – complaints are an important part of the organisations quality management system and are seen as an opportunity to improve. Information gathered via feedback is reviewed and used to inform and improve our operations and policy framework.

As part of our commitment to resolving complaints effectively, VNRS provides clients with information about support services such as advocacy services and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.



GUIDELINE:

- Participants, carers and/or their family members and representatives will be informed at the commencement of services about our Complaints, Compliments and Feedback processes and their right to access advocacy services. Information that is included in the service agreement (provided at the commencement of service) includes: how to provide feedback; what to do if we're unable to resolve the complaint; and information about accessing and advocate to help to provide feedback.
- Staff members are able to assist clients, customers, carers, family members and representatives to provide feedback if needed.
- Complaints, compliments and feedback can be provided to VNRS in any format that suits each individual:
 - in person, verbally by approaching any member of staff for assistance
 - in writing, via email to carlo@vnrs.com.au or by using the 'contact us' form on the website.
 - in writing by mail to PO Box 392 Fairfield VIC 3078
 - by calling us directly on ph. 0410 500 763
 - complaints can be provided anonymously but this can impact the effectiveness of the process of investigation and feedback.
- Feedback should be addressed to the client's clinician in the first instance, but people can nominate the Director of VNRS to handle a complaint if they prefer.
- Staff are empowered to acknowledge, apologise, address and resolve complaints with the client/ carer/ family member at the point of service when possible. A record of the issue/s raised and any actions taken should be noted and added to both the VNRS feedback register and the client's record.
- Where a staff member is not able to manage or resolve feedback immediately, the staff member will refer the complaint to the Director of VNRS for follow-up. The Director of VNRS will follow - up with the person providing feedback.
- If the complaint or feedback includes allegations of abuse, neglect or violence this should be managed in accordance with the guidelines for "responding to incidents or allegation of abuse, neglect or violence" and may need to be reported to the NDIS Commission in accordance with the reportable incident rules (2018) : <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/incident-management-and-reportable-incidents>
- The Director of VNRS will take notes in relation to the complaint or feedback. This is particularly important when the feedback is verbal. Writing notes will assist the Director of VNRS to ensure the nature of the complaint is understood, the information provided is complete and accurately recorded and the persons expected outcomes are clearly identified.
- Clients have the right to access Advocacy services to assist them in providing feedback or to resolve any issues. Advocacy services are listed at DANA – <https://dana.org.au/what-is-advocacy/#find-an-advocate>
- Any complaints received by VNRS will be registered on the Feedback Register.
- Feedback will be acknowledged and investigated and any outcomes or actions agreed with the person providing feedback. We will involve the person providing feedback in the investigation process and provide updates and feedback about the progress of the complaint.



- Feedback about the investigation and any outcomes or follow-up actions will be communicated to the person providing the feedback once the complaint is closed.
- When the person providing feedback is not a client, but is in relation to an aspect of client support, the client should also be informed of the outcome of the complaint where appropriate.
- Communicating complaint outcomes may include verbal feedback, a meeting and / or formal written communication.
- If the client/ carer/ family member/ advocate is not happy with the complaint resolution, outcome or process, they can request an internal review of the complaint.
- Clients also have the right to lodge their complaint with external agencies including:
 - NDIS Quality & Safeguard Commission
- <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints>
 - Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA)
- www.ahpra.gov.au
 - Health Complaints Commissioner
- <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/contact>
- VNRS is a small private practice and as such there will be instances where the roles of clinician and Director of VNRS describe the one person. Where this is the case, the complainant will be advised and options for having their complaint handled will be discussed directly with them, including directly lodging the complaint with one of the above agencies.
- Training is provided to new staff during orientation on complaints management. Refresher training is provided every 3 years.
- There is a standing agenda items in the VNRS quarterly meeting to discuss complaints, compliments and other feedback, so that learning from feedback can be shared with the broader team.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Staff are responsible for reporting complaints, compliments and any feedback to the Director of VNRS before the end of their shift. Serious issues should be reported sooner if possible.
- The Director of VNRS is responsible for the oversight and management of the complaints, compliments and feedback processes and escalating serious concerns.
- The Director is responsible for escalating serious issues to external bodies where required – for example emergency services, including Police, NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission, and the Children and Young Person’s Commissioner.
- The Director is responsible for ensuring that all complaints, compliments and feedback are entered into the *Feedback Register*.
- Feedback trends will be reviewed for the purposes of informing ongoing improvement activities within the service. This will occur annually prior to the first team meeting of the year, and actions for follow-up documented in the meeting minutes.
- The Director is responsible for managing the performance of individual staff members where the feedback provided is directly related to the quality of their service provision.



CONFIDENTIALITY:

- All information regarding complaints will be kept confidential and stored securely and only be accessible to the staff concerned with its resolution.
- Statistics on all types of compliments and complaints will be recorded and used to inform ongoing improvement activities within the service. For this purpose, compliment and complaint information may be disseminated to other staff. However, the identity of the complainant or persons named in the feedback will not be disclosed.

LINKS:

- **NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission**
- <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints>
- **Disability Services Commissioner**
- www.odsc.vic.gov.au
- http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Booklet_everything_youwantedtoknow_.pdf
- **Disability Advocacy Network Australia – Victoria**
- <https://dana.org.au/what-is-advocacy/#find-an-advocate>

Reference: Disability Service Commissioner: Good Practice Guide 2013

