

PROCEDURE

Feedback and Client Complaints

GUIDING POLICY

This procedure is informed and guided by the Client Services Policy.

RATIONALE

Victims of Crime NT (VoCNT) welcomes information and feedback from clients that will enable the organisation to improve the quality of services to the community. All clients are to be made aware of their right to express their concerns or make a formal complaint and should fully understand the complaints procedure and availability of advocates. Clients can expect complaints to be dealt with professionally, fairly, promptly and in a confidential manner.

STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN CARRYING OUT THIS PROCEDURE

Clients may register feedback or lodge a complaint in the following ways:

1. Quality Improvement Suggestion – for general program feedback and improvements
2. Formal Complaint – for matters that require escalation and a formalised response

All complaints of a criminal nature will be immediately referred to the Northern Territory Police.

The staff member/volunteer receiving the complaint in the first instance should refer the matter to the Manager/CEO in the first instance. The Manager/CEO may be able to resolve the matter informally with the offer of a Quality Improvement Suggestion or offer the complainant the option of proceeding to a formal complaints process.

Quality Improvement Suggestion:

If the client decides to proceed with a Quality Improvement Suggestion, the Manager/CEO will send the complainant the appropriate Form via email or post. Any suggestions received will be shared with relevant team members at program or staff meetings via a standing agenda item – Quality Improvement Suggestions/Complaints. Such information can be incorporated into future evaluation and planning processes.

Formal Complaint:

If a decision is made to proceed to a formal complaint, the matter will escalate to the CEO, who will invite the client to complete a Client Complaint Form. The client has a right to invite an advocate or support person to assist the process. The CEO will ensure the following information is given to the complainant:

- All complaints are treated confidentially and that they will suffer no loss of service because they have made a complaint.
- Provide a full explanation of the Feedback and Client Complaints procedure.
- Advise that they have the right to use an advocate of their choice and refer them to appropriate client advocacy services if needed.



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- Explain that complaints are valuable in helping to maintain and improve the service at VoCNT.

The CEO will contact the complainant within 5 working days of receipt of complaint, to discuss what action is proposed and/or has been implemented. The VoCNT Board is to be advised that a formal complaint has been lodged and this will be noted at the next meeting of the Board.

If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the CEO will escalate to the Board who will determine appropriate next steps for resolution.

If after following the above procedures, the client is not further satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the client can complain to:

Crime Victims Services Unit
Level 1, Darwin Central, 21 Knuckey Street, Darwin NT 0800
PO Box 1722, Darwin NT 0801
T: (08) 8924 4080
Free call: 1800 460 363
E: cvsu.doj@nt.gov.au

Once a formal complaint has been resolved, written confirmation of the outcome will be provided by the CEO.

Managing information received as a part of a complaints/feedback process

Information obtained as a part of a complaint submission and review process will be managed in line with the VoCNT *Information Management Procedure*. Completed forms are to be filed in the CEO's office in the Client Complaints file.

Information obtained as a part of a feedback/complaint management process will be managed in line with the VoCNT *Confidentiality and Privacy Procedure*. It may be desirable to involve a third party in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint. In such cases, the client's written permission will be obtained prior to any information being provided to other parties.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- CS Form - Quality Improvement Suggestion
- CS Form - Client Complaint
- Northern Territory Charter of Victim Rights
- GOV Procedure - Confidentiality and Privacy



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