



## **Complaints and Client feedback to NYCH**

NYCH respects the fundamental right of all clients and community members to have an accessible, confidential and constructive avenue for providing positive or negative feedback about NYCH services, and for having these comments or complaints dealt with in a fair and efficient way.

### **Procedure**

Written feedback can be posted or emailed to NYCH, or placed in the Suggestion Box, located at Reception at each centre, or given to any staff member or Director of NYCH.

NYCH also welcomes verbal feedback. Verbal feedback may be about a minor matter that would not in the normal course of events generate a written complaint eg appearance of the centres, delays in appointment times. Alternatively verbal feedback may be provided by clients who do not feel confident putting their issue into a written format (eg clients with low literacy or who have limited written English skills) and in these cases may constitute a more serious issue.

Staff should record the complaint on a Documenting Client Feedback form and forward a copy to the CEO. (<http://www.nych.org.au/CLIENT%20FEEDBACK.pdf> )

Many minor issues can be appropriately addressed and resolved if staff recognise early signs of dissatisfaction, and give clients the opportunity to reasonably express dissatisfaction. Staff should endeavour to diffuse difficulties by identifying with the client's feelings, listening to and acknowledging concerns, and calmly stating valid responses. Staff should in no circumstances enter into an argument. The client should be advised of their right to make a complaint and that this complaint will in no way affect their access to NYCH services.

All serious verbal and signed written complaints received by staff or Board members should be referred to the CEO, who will promptly (within two weeks):

- Arrange a time to discuss the complaint in detail with the complainant, keeping a record of these details and of the desired outcome(s) and explain the procedures;
- Arrange a time to discuss the complaint in detail with the service provider(s) involved, keeping a record of these details and possible outcomes, and explain the procedures; Where appropriate, and if mutually agreed, arrange a joint meeting of the two parties to discuss with the CEO the resolution of the issue and come to a decision;
- Where this is not appropriate, initiate a resolution of the issue and inform both parties;

- Create a confidential file of the complaint and the outcome reached;
- Report the matter to the Executive of the Board if serious enough;
- Inform any other staff who may be affected by the complaint or its outcome, of the nature of the complaint, with the aim of prevention in the future. In most cases, this would include the Manager of the service or staff member about whom the complaint has been made.

The complainant has the right to have an interpreter and/or an advocate at any of these discussions. The staff member(s) also has the right to have a support person present (for example, their Manager).

Any persons wishing to make a complaint against the CEO should be offered the opportunity to discuss the issue with the CEO, or advised that they may take up the matter with the President of the Board of Management.

If any of the parties directly involved are not satisfied with the decision made, or if a resolution cannot be agreed upon, either party may appeal to the Board of Management. If the matter can still not be satisfactorily resolved, the complainant should be advised that s/he may follow up the matter further with an external appeal mechanism – eg, the Department of Human Services, the Ombudsman, the Victorian Health Services Commissioner, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner.

### **Monitoring complaints**

All client feedback should receive an appropriate response from the CEO, a Manager or a Team Leader. Responses should be documented using the Client Feedback Response Form. When client feedback is received, the Executive Assistant will convert the information into the format of this form and forward it to the relevant person for a response. Completed response forms and all accompanying documents should be forwarded to the CEO and EA for recording purposes.

An analysis of complaints (both verbal and written) will be provided to the board on an annual basis.