



POLICY

YFS is committed to handling and resolving complaints and disputes in a confidential, fair and timely way. We take on feedback both positive and negative, as a source of ideas for improving our services and other activities.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to internal and external complaints, disputes from clients, tenants, community agencies, business partners, local business, residents and government agencies. Any negative feedback received is recorded and if possible, treated as a complaint.

REFERENCES

- *YFS Client Information Pocket Guide (101304)*
- *Human Services Quality Standard 5 Feedback, Complaints and Appeals*

DEFINITIONS

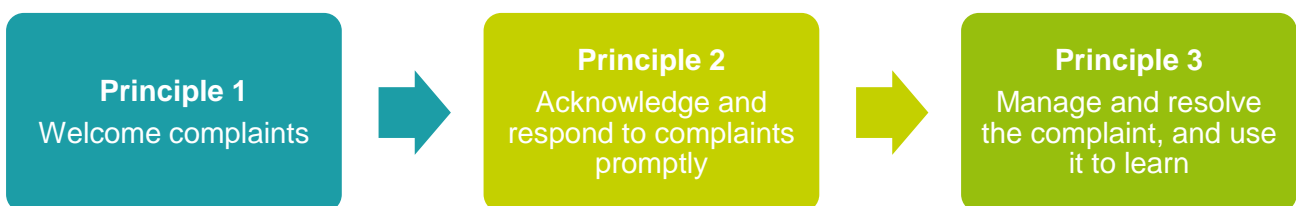
Feedback – Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about use, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Complaint - Any expression of dissatisfaction or concern made to YFS by YFS, or on behalf of, an individual, group or related to YFS' services. A complaint can be about the organisation, a staff member, volunteer, student or board member.

Dispute - A dispute is a disagreement or difference between clients, tenants and external stakeholders about a YFS decision or inaction.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An effective complaint handling system must be modelled on the principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration into organisational culture.



PROCEDURE

YFS encourage feedback from our clients and stakeholders, to inform continuous improvement in service design and delivery.

1. Complaints are welcome at any time, from any source.
2. Any staff member can handle a client complaint or client feedback.
3. We treat all complaints as reasonable.
4. We facilitate access to interpreters or advocates as required.
5. We accept that clients and stakeholders have the right to make complaints or provide feedback about staff behaviour or the standard of service provided.
6. We respond to complaints promptly.

7. We treat all complaints confidentially.
8. We conduct staff training in complaint handling.
9. There are no repercussions for people who complain.
10. We monitor client and stakeholder satisfaction via planned feedback surveys.

Accessibility

Information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised on our [website](#) as well as:

- Client information posters displayed in all client rooms and open areas
- Client information pocket guide
- Property and Tenancy Tenant Information.

We accept complaints and notice of disputes

- in person
- by phone (YFS feedback line - 3826 1596 or our office – 3826 1500)
- [YFS website](#)
- Email (yfs@yfs.org.au)
- in writing to the CEO

YFS Ltd.
PO Box 727
Woodridge QLD 4114

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative with their consent.

YFS will arrange translator or interpreter services for hearing impaired clients or clients who wish to make their complaint or dispute in a language other than English.

YFS will address only those aspects of a complaint that are not discriminatory. For example, not racist, sexist, ageist, etc.

Staff grievances are handled by Human Resources procedures.

Complainants have the right to:

- be treated with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality
- be distressed at the time of making a complaint; we do not reject the substance of a complaint because of the manner in which it is delivered
- have their complaint or dispute handled without prejudice or assumptions. The emphasis shall be resolving the problem or addressing the dispute
- take their complaint or dispute to an external authority at any point during the process
- take their complaint to the Queensland Human Rights Commission if they have not had a response from us within 45 days or if they are unhappy with the resolution of the complaint
- not be discriminated against or suffer any adverse actions as a result of making a complaint about standards of service or disputing an organisational decision.

Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints within three working days.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

Response to the complaint may be either verbal or in written form, and will depend on the seriousness of the complaint or dispute, the ease with which it is rectified and the desires of the complainant. Any written response will either be hand delivered, emailed with a receipt request or mailed via Express Post.

Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling the complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of complaints will not be conducted by the original decision maker.

A complaint about a staff member or CEO is about the behaviour of that person in the course of their duties as a representative of YFS.

- A complaint about a staff member can be made to the manager of that person or the CEO. The manager will collect necessary information, undertake analysis of the complaint and submit it to their manager with recommendations for resolution.
- Depending on the circumstances, the client will be asked if they would like contact to cease (depending on the complaint) with the worker/s involved while the matter is dealt with. If this is their preference, the manager will arrange for services to continue.
- The staff member that is the subject of the complaint will be informed as soon as practicable.
- If the complaint is related to performance, it will be taken into account during the staff member's supervision meetings and performance management processes.
- A complaint about the CEO will immediately be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management who will decide on an appropriate course of action, recorded and processed by the Chairperson, and stored to maintain privacy.. The Chairperson's email and phone number will be provided.

A complaint about a YFS client involving YFS programs/staff will be addressed by the relevant manager by arranging an urgent meeting.

Complaints about YFS tenants

- The nature of the complaint will determine how the matter is to be resolved.
- Complaints, including complaints about a tenant's behaviour, which are not police matters will be dealt with in accord with our complaint's principles. After 13 weeks in a Crisis Accommodation Property (CAP), they will be dealt with under the RTRAA (2008).
- Disputes will be addressed by engaging the complainant and tenant in a dispute resolutions process such as mediation through an independent body. YFS may refer those involved to South Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre in Brisbane.

If a client or tenant disputes a decision made about them; the following will apply:

- The person dealing with the dispute has no personal interest in the matter
- The manager reviewing the decision is not the original decision maker
- The client or tenant who is disputing the decision will be provided with written progress of and reasons regarding the decision within 14 working days of the dispute being reported to YFS.

External bodies

In relation to all complaints and disputes the person receiving the matter will advise the complainant of their right to access external complaints authorities or the relevant funding department at any point during the complaints process – refer to YFS Client Information Pocket Guide (101304).

Disputes with tenants on matters covered by the RTRAA are taken to the QCAT.

People making serious complaints will be immediately advised of their right to register their complaint with external complaint bodies and/or advocacy services.

If YFS receives 3rd hand information in the form of a complaint about a crime, we will recommend this be reported to police.

Other serious allegations or concerns such as professional misconduct may involve other relevant external bodies. The matter will be immediately referred to the CEO. In these instances the CEO will appoint an internal and/or external person to deal with the matter.

Control of Records

The person handling the feedback or complaint will ensure that it is recorded in the YFS Quality Register, regardless of the form in which they were received. Action taken is to be completed within 15 working days except on occasions where there is complexity and systemic changes required.

Relevant documents (complaint and response) are scanned and saved to the applicable client record system and in the YFS Quality Register.

Analysis and Evaluation of Feedback and Complaints

Regular analysis of feedback and complaints is undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Reports and their analysis are provided to the CEO and Executive Management at quarterly Business Review meetings. Where there is a serious nature to the complaint, it is taken to the YFS Board.

Training

Staff, management, and the Board has a commitment to efficient and fair resolution of complaints. Staff will be instructed in why we welcome complaints, handling principles and procedures.