

Client Feedback and Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

This Policy outlines how Wayss will promote a culture where feedback, both positive and those suggesting areas for improvement, and complaints are welcomed as an important component of our commitment to a respectful and professional relationship with our clients and renters.

Wayss is a Child Safe organisation and child safety is at the forefront of our program delivery. Our policies ensure that child safety is a primary part of everyday thinking and practice. All employees, contractors and volunteers have an obligation to ensure we keep children safe from harm and abuse.

We're committed to upholding the rights of all of our stakeholders and creating a workplace that fosters inclusion and diversity. We believe that by bringing our authentic selves to Wayss, we can contribute to building strong teams, cultivating leaders, and creating an organisation that is well-suited for every individual. It's essential to us that we establish an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, can be themselves and feel safe, valued and respected. Regardless of whether you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or LGBTIQ member, are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or a person living with a disability, as an individual associating with Wayss, you have the right to participate and engage in an environment that is free from discrimination and bias, and we strive to create a workplace that honours that commitment.

2. Scope

This policy is specifically for clients and renters. Feedback and complaints from other parties, such as staff and neighbours are covered in separate policies and procedures, such as the **Neighbours Policy** and **Wayss Staff Complaints Policy**.

3. Policy Principles

Clients and renters will be informed of their right to give feedback and make a complaint and will be provided with information about how to do this.

For the purposes of this policy, feedback is defined as negative or positive comments about Wayss' services or personnel with no expectation of a formal response or resolution. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about Wayss staff, services, or facilities, where a response or resolution is expected.

Wayss will uphold the following principles with respect to feedback or complaints:

- Commitment to the rights of clients and renters to provide negative feedback or make a complaint and to expect an efficient and fair resolution
- A feedback and complaint management process which is fair to all parties involved
- Providing information about how to provide feedback or make a complaint
- Ensuring the feedback / complaint process is simple and easy to access
- Assisting clients to provide feedback or make a complaint if they need it
- Reviewing and where required, actioning feedback and complaints swiftly
- Providing information to clients and renters about any actions taken because of their feedback or complaint

4. Advocacy

Where a client or renter wants to provide feedback or make a complaint and requires the support of an advocate to assist with this, Wayss will provide information on how to access this service.

An advocate can be a friend, family member, staff member or person from an advocacy agency. Where a client or renter chooses to have an advocate act on their behalf, consent will be obtained from the client so that information can be released or discussed with the advocate. The client or renter has the right to withdraw this consent at any time during the process.

5. Confidentiality

All clients or renters or advocates who provide feedback or make a complaint will have their privacy respected in accordance with **Client Privacy Policy**.

A Wayss staff member who is the subject of negative client or renter feedback will have their privacy respected in accordance with **Workforce Privacy Policy**. In these cases, negative feedback will only be discussed with management and the appropriate parties involved.

6. Receiving Feedback

All feedback and complaints received will be recorded in the feedback register and shared with the Executive Management Team monthly.

Where negative feedback has been received, the Wayss executive team will assess if further review is required and will ensure that any areas for improvement are addressed. Where a client or renter makes a complaint, Wayss will acknowledge that complaint within 5 days of receiving it and will conduct an investigation and ensure a satisfactory resolution, within 30 days of receiving the complaint.

7. Definitions

Wayss identifies and categorises feedback and complaints as per the following definitions.

Positive feedback	Clients express satisfaction with the services provided and/or the support received from staff during service delivery.
Negative feedback/Informal complaint	Clients and/or client advocates express dissatisfaction with the services provided, the access to services or staff behaviour during service delivery. The client/advocate has not explicitly stated that they wish to lodge a formal complaint.
Formal Complaint	Clients and/or client advocates express dissatisfaction with the services provided, the access to services, or staff behaviour during service delivery. The client/advocate has requested an investigation has been asked by an appropriate Wayss staff member if they wish to lodge a formal complaint or has lodged a complaint via external avenues.
Enquiries	Clients and/or client advocates may submit enquiries regarding Wayss services and/or programs through the Feedback channels.

8. Categories of feedback

Wayss will define categories of feedback, where possible, to assist in analysis, identification of systems issues and to inform continuous improvement.

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The following are broad categories of complaints:

- Client rights
- Privacy or confidentiality
- Service Access
- Service Information
- Service Delivery
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Facilities
- Tenancy
- Safety
- Continuous Improvement
- Other

Wayss recognises that the adoption of an effective feedback procedure is more likely to lead to client satisfaction and enables the service to evaluate the need for improvement.

Wayss will record and monitor all client feedback. An analysis of this data will be used to improve client services.

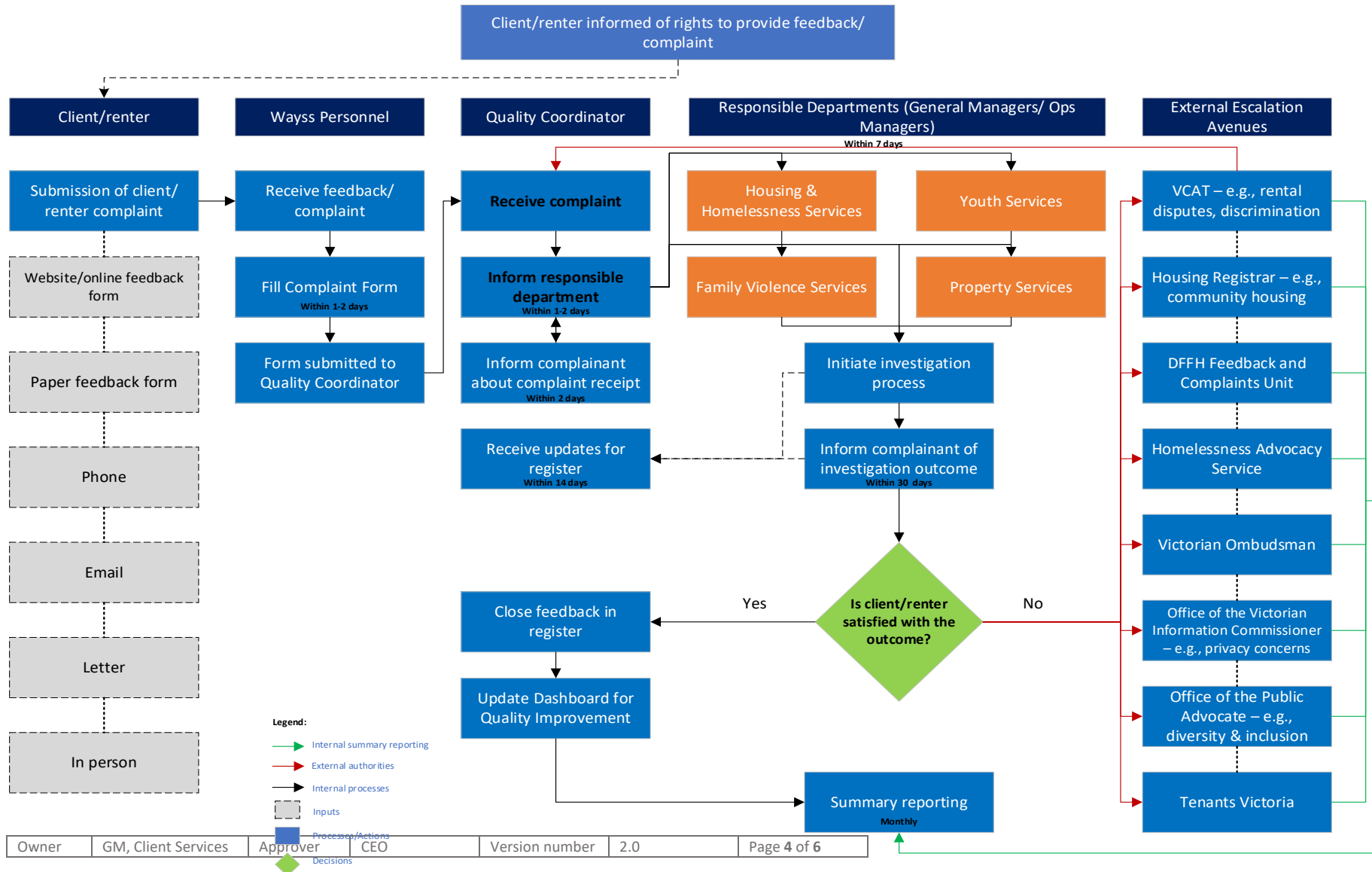
9. Wayss Complaints Handling Process

Wayss welcomes its clients and renters to query any decisions it makes and/or ask questions about our work practices. If a client or renter wishes to provide feedback to Wayss and/or believes a decision or action made by Wayss is incorrect, the first step is to request that the complaint be reviewed, or that the decision/action be reconsidered by Wayss as per this policy and our **Client Feedback and Complaints Procedure**. The flowchart below demonstrates the process undertaken at Wayss to review complaints and feedback received by our clients, renters or their advocates, and the available external escalation points where they can take their complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached by Wayss.

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Wayss Complaints Handling Process Flowchart



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10. Staff Training

Wayss will provide staff with access to relevant training to further develop their skills in complaints handling.

11. Responsibilities

11.1. All staff

Wayss staff have the responsibility to:

- Ensure clients and renters are informed of their right to provide feedback or complain
- Ensure clients and renters are informed of their right to appeal any decision made with respect to a complaint
- Ensure clients and renters have access to written information describing how feedback or complaints can be made and how they will be managed
- Attempt to resolve negative feedback or a complaint at the time it is made
- Assist the client to access advocacy agencies
- Ensure feedback and complaints are recorded in the Feedback Register

11.2. Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to feedback and complaints in accordance with this policy
- Ensuring feedback and complaints are recorded in the Feedback Register
- Advising clients of the outcome of the review and management of their feedback or complaint and the process for appealing an outcome

11.3. Executive Team

The Executive Team are responsible for:

- Analysis of the feedback register to identify any systemic issues
- Evaluation of the feedback and complaints management process
- Responding to complaints from the Housing Registrar and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
- Receiving reports on any high-risk feedback or unresolved complaints
- Supporting management with respect to actions needed to resolve a complaint
- Informing the Wayss Board of complaints that may have legal, regulatory or reputation impacts

12. Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every two years or sooner if required.

13. Related Policies and Resources

- DFFH Human Service Standards
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988
- Client Feedback and Complaints Policy

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- Client Participation Policy
- Client Privacy Policy
- Neighbours Policy
- Quality Governance and Client Voice Frameworks
- Client Feedback and Complaints Procedure
- Workforce Privacy Policy

14. Change History

Date	Version	Summary of changes	Authoriser
1/11/20	V1.0	Initial Draft	CEO
03/04/2023	V2.0	Updated to include Client Feedback Procedure and escalation points as per Housing Registrar compliance requirements	CEO