

Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Learning Links welcomes compliments, suggestions, feedback and complaints as a method of continually improving our service performance, systems and processes to ensure delivery of effective and quality services.

Learning Links is committed to ensuring that customers, members of the public and agencies are able to provide feedback and suggestions within a framework that is transparent and readily accessed.

This policy outlines the guidelines for:

- providing feedback and complaints
- managing and reporting feedback and complaints.

Staff grievances are not covered in this policy and are dealt with in the Learning Links' Grievance Policy.

Policy

Learning Links is committed to receiving feedback from customers, members of the public, and agencies as means of promoting continuous service improvement and recognises the right of any individual to provide feedback or raise a complaint regarding any of the following:

- Any aspect of the service provided and /or offered to customers at a Learning Links' location or on an outreach basis
- The behaviour of, and/or interaction with, any Learning Links member of staff
- Learning Links' practices, policies or procedures.

Learning Links respects the right of individuals to make complaints and complainants will be treated with respect and provided with support and assistance throughout the process.

Eligibility

This policy applies to all Learning Links' staff, clients and other individuals. The term staff includes volunteers, students, and contractors.

Responsible

Responsibilities for the policy are:

| Person | Responsible for |
|--|--|
| Chief Executive Officer | <p>Ensuring the establishment, maintenance and promotion of an effective feedback and complaints management system.</p> <p>Ensuring clearly defined authority and responsibility for the Feedback and Complaints Policy and processes.</p> <p>Ensuring that there is a process for regular Complaints Management reporting to the Board, the management team and staff.</p> |
| General Manager Current delegation sits with GM, Quality and Impact | <p>Managing and communicating the Feedback and Complaints systems and processes including the process for raising a complaint and maintaining the Complaints Register.</p> <p>Liaising with the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Team and staff to ensure their support and compliance to the complaints systems.</p> <p>Ensuring that complaints are responded to in a fair and consistent manner, and in accordance with this policy and related procedures.</p> |

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| | <p>Ensuring that all complaints received are logged in the Complaints Register.</p> <p>Establishing effective performance monitoring, evaluation, and analysis that includes information on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of complaints received • Source of complaints • Time taken to respond to complaints • Number of complaints resolved or not resolved • Identification of potential risk. <p>Providing Feedback and Complaint Management reports and corrective action recommendations to the Executive Team.</p> <p>Implementing internal and external escalation mechanisms for unresolved complaints or matters arising from feedback and complaints.</p> <p>Ensuring that managers access all relevant information in regard to complaints escalated to external professionals or agencies.</p> |
| Managers | <p>Ensuring the promotion of, and compliance to, the Complaints Management process.</p> <p>Supporting staff to respond effectively to complaints.</p> <p>Giving consideration to the complaints data and the systemic issues arising from complaints and making changes and improvements to resolve the root cause of issues.</p> <p>Reviewing and resolving complaints escalated.</p> |
| Staff | <p>Respecting the right of individuals to make complaints and treat complainants with respect and provide them with appropriate support and assistance throughout the process.</p> <p>Ensuring you are familiar with, and maintain current information, regarding the Feedback and Complaints Management System and related policy and procedures.</p> <p>Ensuring that all complaints raised both verbally and in writing are acknowledged and responded to in a fair and consistent manner, and that the information regarding the complaint is discussed with your immediate supervisor, and formally logged via the Feedback and Complaints Form.</p> <p>Providing customers and other individuals with information about the complaints processes as required.</p> |

Confidentiality

The expression, investigation, and resolution of complaints will protect (wherever possible and as appropriate) the confidentiality of those involved in and implicated by the complaint.

Those involved in or implicated by the complaint will be free of unfair repercussions or victimisation.

All information provided to us will be handled in accordance with Learning Links Privacy Policy and the Privacy Act 1988. More information is available at www.privacy.gov.au

All records will be securely stored for a period of at least seven years.

Access to the complaints policy

The Complaints Policy is available on the Learning Links' website and the staff intranet site. A copy of this Policy can be requested from any Learning Links location.

Raising a Complaint

Clients and other individuals can raise a complaint:

- In person with a staff member
- By Email
- By Telephone
- Via the contact us option on Learning Links' website

Feedback Forms can also be obtained from the Customer Support Officers at all Learning Links' locations. Email the completed feedback forms to: complaints@learninglinks.org.au.

All complaints are to be emailed to complaints@learninglinks.org.au and should include all relevant details.

Receiving a complaint

All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to promptly and sensitively.

When staff are approached by an individual wishing to make a complaint they will consider the complainants' expectations and if they:

- require assistance in making the complaint
- want to lodge a formal complaint

Staff will refer all complaint matters to their relevant manager who will assume direct responsibility for the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

Registering a complaint

All complaints will be registered in the central Complaints Register. This will ensure:

- reporting of all complaints
- information pertinent to the nature and outcome of complaints is in one place
- secure storage of all related information and documents
- review of feedback and complaints to ensure effective corrective actions and continuous improvement.

Managers dealing with the complaint are responsible for contacting the General Manager, Quality and Impact, within two working days of receiving the complaint, to provide the initial information to be included in the Complaints Register.

Resolving a Complaint

Assess all complaints to identify if they need to be escalated to the next level of management.

| Example | Action |
|--|--|
| A customer indicates that they have not received recent work samples from the professional working with their child | Can be responded to and resolved by the professional. |
| A customer communicates their dissatisfaction with the professional working with their child and that Learning Links is not providing a professional and quality service | This complaint cannot be readily resolved and should be referred to the manager. |

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the staff member receiving the complainant is empowered in the first instance to:

- Acknowledge the complaint if communicated directly and thank the complainant for their feedback.
- Provide the customer or individual with a copy of the Feedback and Complaints Form.
- Document the concerns raised.
- Enact any immediate steps to resolve the complaint at the initial point of contact. This process may resolve issues quickly and prevent them from escalating.
- In all cases, the staff member's manager should be made aware of the complaint and may need to become involved in facilitating a satisfactory outcome.
- Refer all complaints received to the manager who will assume responsibility for investigating and resolving the complaint on the shift they are received.

Escalating a complaint

The complaint will be referral to the position with the most direct responsibility for the issue/s implicated in the complaint. If more than one service is implicated in the complaint it will be referred directly to the CEO.

For more complex matters, where a full and complete response is not immediately possible, the complaint will be recorded and acknowledged in writing within 2 working days.

Learning Links will prioritise the investigation and finalisation of the complaint as expeditiously as possible. In the instance of the matter being complex and taking in excess of 30 days to resolve, Learning Links will contact the complainant to provide an update.

Complaints requiring a written response to an external professional or agency will be referred to the relevant General Manager or the CEO following review by the General Manager, Quality and Impact.

Reviewing the Complaint

The complaint will be fully investigated and documented throughout the process. Information will be gathered and recorded, and the complainant will be supported and encouraged to contribute further information as required.

The manager with the most direct responsibility for investigating and resolving the complaint will forward any additional information provided, to the GM, Quality and Impact.

Complaints requiring a written response to an external professional or agency will be referred to the relevant General Manager or the CEO following review by the General Manager, Quality and Impact.

Following investigation of the Complaint, the manager responsible for conducting the organisation should complete the Complaint Investigation Form and send it to the General Manager, Quality & Impact. To minimise the potential for future similar or related complaints, recommendations for future strategies or actions should be included.

Responding to the complaint

Following the investigation, a written response will be provided to the complainant that addresses, accurately and objectively, all issues raised.

Where possible, the written response will be signed by the CEO, and sent within 10 working days of the date of the complaint having been acknowledged.

The written response may include information on what the complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the response.

Reporting on complaints and implementing corrective actions

The General Manager, Quality and Impact, or their delegate, will review, collate and analyse the information contained in the Complaints Register and prepare a monthly report, inclusive of corrective actions and recommendations as required to the CEO and Executive Team and the Board.

Getting External Assistance

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they may choose to seek the assistance of an independent external review agency of their choosing. On request, Learning Links can provide a list of external agencies relevant to the nature of the complaint and the outcome sought.

Related documents

Feedback and Complaints Form
Feedback and Complaints Register
Complaint Investigation Form

Document control

This table outlines the control details for this document.

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