

Purpose

Darebin City Council's Supported and Connected Living (S&CL) department is committed to making sure anyone who uses our services, or is affected by our work, can make a complaint, give feedback, or appeal a decision.

This policy applies to all S&CL employees, contractors, volunteers and students.

We will respond to all concerns in a fair, transparent and respectful way, and ensure everyone has equal access to the process.

This policy and its procedure aim to:

- allow anyone to make a complaint or provide feedback
- create a supportive environment where complaints are welcomed
- keep the process simple, accessible and easy to use
- clearly communicate and promote the process to all clients and stakeholders
- assess all complaints fairly and respond promptly
- follow procedural fairness and natural justice
- meet all legal requirements

Definitions

Complaint: Dissatisfaction about staff, services or processes that requires a response.

Complainant: Any person or organisation raising a concern.

Escalation: Taking a complaint to an external body if the person is not satisfied with the outcome.

Positive feedback: A compliment about a service, interaction or outcome.

Improvement feedback: Suggestions to help improve our services.

Open disclosure: A process used when things go wrong. It involves listening to the person, offering a sincere apology, explaining what happened, and outlining what we will do to stop it from happening again.

The five steps of open disclosure are:

1. Recognise when something has gone wrong
2. Address immediate needs and provide support
3. Acknowledge and apologise or express regret

4. Explain what happened
 5. Learn from it and make improvements
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Principles

Supported and Connected Living will:

- support all clients, families, carers and advocates to raise concerns
- consider all complaints, including those from your supporters and carers
- treat every complainant with respect
- keep all information confidential unless required by law
- ensure clients can access advocacy and support
- try to resolve complaints to the complainant's satisfaction
- ensure all clients and families can access the complaints policy
- respond in a timely manner and meet required timeframes
- keep all parties informed throughout the process
- ensure all staff receive information and training about handling complaints during their induction and regularly during their employment
- inform complainants about how to escalate concerns externally
- make sure no person is penalised or denied service for making a complaint
- use feedback and complaint data to improve services
- regularly review and improve the complaints system

Council's organisational values guide staff and support the successful use of this policy.