

Complaints and Appeals Information Sheet

As a client of The Burdekin Association, you have the right to complain about the services you receive from us. This information sheet is provided to you upon entry to our service and each time you make a complaint.

A summary of our Complaints Policy:

The Burdekin Association is committed to the effective investigation and resolution of all grievances and complaints. The Burdekin Association will ensure that the process is:

- **Confidential** by limiting access to the information about the complaint to those who are directly involved in making or investigating the complaint.
- **Impartial** by ensuring that both sides can tell their side of the story. No action shall be taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered, unless there is immediate danger to someone.
- **Free of repercussions** by guaranteeing that no action will be taken against a person who makes a complaint and that there will be no victimisation of a person who complains.
- **Fair** by ensuring that people are informed of any allegations against them, provide them with a fair process to address these allegations and conduct the investigation without delay.
- **Timely and prompt** by ensuring that all complaints are acknowledged in writing within 48 hours and efforts made to seek a resolution within 4 weeks unless this is unreasonable.
- **Outcome focused** by ensuring the complaints process will lead to a resolution of the complaint.
- **Valid** by complying with all relevant legislation.

Common Questions about Complaints¹

What can I complain about?

You can complain about anything we - meaning our staff, volunteers and carers - have done or haven't done.

You can also make a complaint about the programs, workshops or services we provide and the office and accommodation we provide these services in.

Basically, if you're not satisfied with the things we do, you can tell us and we will do our best to make things better.

¹ These questions and answers have been adapted from the National Office for Child Safety's *Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019), which sets the nation-wide standards for handling complaints from children and young people. The full document can be found at www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/domestic-policy/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people

Who can I speak to if I feel unsafe or concerned about something?

You can talk to anybody who works here that you feel comfortable with.

You can also submit your complaint any of these ways:

- Email: burdekin.admin@burdekin.org.au or a staff member's email
- Send us a message on social media: Instagram: @burdekinassociation
Facebook: www.facebook.com/theburdekinassociation
- Text: any staff member
- Call: 02 8976 1777
- Post: The Burdekin Association, PO Box 1323 Dee Why NSW 2099
- Complete a Complaints Form or widget (available at www.burdekin.org.au/contact-us)

Can I remain anonymous?

Of course, it is your choice whether to provide your name or details. We will still take your feedback seriously and act on identified problems or opportunities for improvement.

What's the difference between a formal and informal complaint?

A *formal* complaint must usually be in writing and requires an investigation to find out what happened and how to make things better. If the situation is really serious, the complaint will have to become formal.

An *informal* complaint might be something you tell a staff member that you're not happy with, and together you can find a way of making things better. Your Case Manager can help you decide whether to make an informal or formal complaint.

Can somebody help me make a complaint?

Yes. If you would like a parent, carer, friend, counsellor or someone else you trust to help you make a complaint, you can ask them to complain on your behalf or you bring them with you when you make a complaint. This person will be your advocate and they can help ensure your voice is heard. We will need to get your written permission to speak to this trusted person/advocate about the complaint.

If you are a person with disability, you might be able to use a government-funded professional advocate to help you with the complaints process. To find the locations and contact details of disability advocates near you, go to www.disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au.

You can use an interpreter if you need to or if your parent or friend needs one.

Will I be in trouble for speaking up?

No. Your safety and how you feel is important to us. By speaking up, you are helping us to do a better job and take better care of you and other children and young people.

What will you do with the information I tell you?

If you tell us that you have been treated badly or you are feeling unsafe or worried about something, we will listen, write down what you tell us, and try to fix it. After we talk to you, we may need to find out more about what happened. We will tell you how long this will take and what will happen next.

Will you keep what I have told you a secret?

We will keep the information you tell us private, though someone within the organisation (generally the CEO and often the Program Manager) may need to be involved or told some details. We will tell you if this needs to happen.

Sometimes we may need to share certain information with another people and organisations, such as the police or DCJ if we are worried about your safety, or the safety of others.

How will I know you're dealing with my complaint?

We will ask if you would like us to give you updates about what is happening as we look into what you have told us and get further information.

You can tell us how you would like us to let you know how things are going with your complaint, e.g. in person, over the phone, by email or text message.

We will let you know when we have finished looking into your complaint and explain what we're going to do.

What if I don't want to be involved in the investigation?

We will only contact you if you want us to. If you would like us to give information to a family member, carer or advocate instead, that's also okay. If you change your mind and later want to speak with us, you can contact our complaint contact person or anybody else you trust in the organisation.

What if I'm still not happy?

If you are not happy with how we handle your complaint or the result, you have the right to Appeal.

This means the complaint and how it was handled will be reviewed by the CEO or Board.

If you're not happy with this result, want our decision process looked over, or want to have your complaint about our service reviewed by an external complaint handling body, there are options listed below.

- NSW Ombudsman www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/contact-us
- Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/contact/complaints
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints/

We can help you to do this if you like.

Your feedback and experiences are important to us – please let us know if you need help understanding this form or have any other questions about our Complaints policy.

I have read and understood The Burdekin Association's *Complaints and Appeals Information Sheet* and understand how to make a complaint about the services I receive.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____