

Purpose

The *Complaints Policy* sets out the Barnardos Australia (Barnardos) policy on the management of complaints.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide access to an open, sensitive and clear complaints-handling process
- ensure complaints are handled impartially, justly, and confidentially
- ensure complaints are received and responded to in a timely manner, and
- facilitate continuous program improvement informed by a robust analysis of complaints.

Policy Statement

Barnardos takes all complaints very seriously.

We acknowledge everyone's right to express their opinion about our services.

We will provide clients and the community with the opportunity to influence the way Barnardos works through meaningful engagement.

We will provide an opportunity for concerns to be raised and addressed in ways that ensure fairness, accountability and transparency.

No client will lose services, face threatened or actual retribution, or be disadvantaged in any way because they have made a complaint to Barnardos.

Complaints provide valuable feedback about the level of satisfaction with Barnardos services.

We are committed to resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity, in a way that respects and values a person's feedback.

We receive complaints not only about the actions of our staff, but also the actions of our partner organisations. Where our services are contracted, we expect our partners (subcontracted service providers) to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system.

Scope

This policy is relevant to all Barnardos clients. Clients include people who are receiving a service from Barnardos (children, young people and families) and our carers. Barnardos also welcomes complaints from community members and external organisations.

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This policy applies across all Barnardos programs (including partners) and applies to:

- decisions made by Barnardos staff about Barnardos services
- the conduct of staff, volunteers and carers
- Barnardos Policies.

Staff grievances, which are concerns raised by employees and volunteers about their work or work environment, are managed according to the Barnardos *Grievance Policy*.

Allegations of misconduct (illegal, immoral, illegitimate practices) concerning corruption, fraud, theft, harassment, unlawful discrimination, and practices endangering the health or safety of staff, volunteers, the general public or environment are managed by the Barnardos *Whistleblower Policy*.

Quality of care and/or reportable conduct allegations relating to carers, volunteers and staff are managed by Barnardos *Reportable Conduct Policy*.

Principles

Barnardos has an open and learning organisational culture and is committed to the following principles:

Principles	What does this mean at Barnardos
People focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone has a right to complain• People making complaints are treated with respect• Anonymous complaints are treated like any other complaint• Complainants are not adversely affected because of a complaint made by them or on their behalf• Barnardos will accept complaints from representatives of clients, including family members, friends and other people or organisations
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about making a complaint is well publicised and made available at all centers• A complaint may be made to any employee of Barnardos in person, by phone, email or letter• Barnardos recognises the needs of people, including people with disability, children, young people, people living in regional and remote areas, the aged and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds• Complaining is free

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Responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints are acknowledged promptly and responded to fairly, reasonably, within a timely manner• Staff actively listen, empathise and acknowledge when the response was not the best it could have been. We endeavour to continuously improve our service delivery.• Staff are supported with training and resources to receive and manage complaints• Complaints are documented and reviewed
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints are taken seriously and are handled fairly, objectively and without bias• To understand, analyse and resolve complaints• Complaints are assessed and categorised on nominated criteria• The identity of complainants is protected, where this is practical and appropriate• The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will apply• Decisions are reviewed by people other than the original decision maker
Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The policy is reviewed at specified intervals to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Refer to Section 2 for next review date.• Systems are in place to record, identify trends, monitor timeliness, identify improvements and report

Who do I complain to within Barnardos?

Ideally, issues should be discussed and resolved with your Barnardos worker. If you're not satisfied with the outcome you can:

1. Talk to the program manager
2. If you still have concerns you can contact the Barnardos Centre Manager or Regional Manager
3. If your complaint hasn't been resolved, you can raise it with the Executive Manager by emailing complaints@barnardos.org.au
4. The CEO of Barnardos is available to resolve complaints, if the Executive Manager hasn't been able to. Please email: complaints@barnardos.org.au

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Accountability

Barnardos expects all its staff to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines respective roles and responsibilities within Barnardos.

Who	Commitment	Actions and responsibility
Executive Management Team (EMT)	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes, monitors and reviews Barnardos Complaints Management System¹• Ensures systems are in place for staff in responding to complaints• Regularly review reports about trends and issues
Management Team	Establish and manage Barnardos Complaint Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with Barnardos' Policy.• Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly. Encourage staff to recommend ways to improve Barnardos' Complaint Management System.• Regularly discuss the receipt and resolution of complaints across Centres/Programs• Provide regular reports to EMT on the management of complaints, including opportunities for improvement.
All staff	Understand and comply with Barnardos' Complaint Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints• Comply with Barnardos Complaint Management System• Accept accountability for receiving, recording and reporting complaints• Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by Management.

Who can I go to outside of Barnardos?

You may also raise your complaint with an external oversight agency, if Barnardos has not resolved the issues to your satisfaction (i.e. CEO resolution).

The external bodies in the ACT and NSW are listed below.

¹ Barnardos Complaints Management Systems is comprised of Barnardos Complaints Policy, Complaints Procedures and Complaints Register(s).

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All complaints from external bodies should be addressed to the relevant Barnardos Executive Manager and also emailed to complaints@barnardos.org.au

ACT external oversight bodies	NSW external oversight bodies
<p>Human Rights Commission (HRC) (for services for children and young people and people with a disability) Address: Level 2, CFM Building, 11 Moore St, Canberra City, ACT Phone: 02 6205 2222 TTY: 02 6205 1666 Email: human.rights@act.gov.au Web: http://www.hrc.act.gov.au</p>	<p>NSW Ombudsman (for matters related to children and young people) Address: Level 24/580 George Street Sydney, NSW, 2000 Phone: 02 9286 1000 Toll free: 1800 451 524 Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>Public Advocate of the ACT (PA) (children and young people) Address: Level 2, CFM Building, 11 Moore St, Canberra City Phone: 02 6205 2222 Email: PublicAdvocateReferral@act.gov.au</p>	<p>NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (for NDIS services) Address: PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750 Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544. Email: nswcomplaints@ndiscommission.gov.au actcomplaints@ndiscommission.gov.au Web: https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/</p>
<p>ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) (for tenancy issues, reviewable administrative decision and discrimination complaints) Address: ACT Health Building, Level 4, 1 Moore Street, Canberra City ACT Phone: 02 6207 1740 Fax: 02 6205 4855 Email: tribunal@act.gov.au Web: www.acat.act.gov.au</p>	<p>NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) (for tenancy issues, reviewable administrative decisions and discrimination complaints) Address: Level 14 Civic Tower, 66 Goulburn St, Sydney Phone: 1300 006 228 and follow the prompts Interpreter Service (TIS): 13 14 50 Email: ncatenquiries@ncat.nsw.gov.au Web: www.ncat.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>ACT Human Services Registrar (complaints regarding care and protection services and community housing) Address: GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 Quality, Complaints & Regulation Phone: 02 6207 5474 Email: quality@act.gov.au Web: https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au</p>	<p>Early Childhood Education Directorate (compliance issues in early childhood services) Address: Locked Bag 5107, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124 Phone: 1800 619 113 Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au Web: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education</p>

Related Information

Barnardos

This policy has been written with reference to and operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Policy – Service Management and Improvement
- Policy – Privacy and Confidentiality
- Policy – Whistleblower
- Policy – Grievance

External

This policy has been written with reference to and operates in conjunction with the following legislation and external standards:

NSW

- Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014
- NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care 2015: Standard 9
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012
- Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care in NSW
- Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2015

ACT

- Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care in ACT
- Ombudsman Act 1989
- Children and Young People Act 2008
- Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008

Commonwealth

- National Standards for Disability Services
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The *National Regulatory Code* for the *National Regulatory System for Community Housing*
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- National Standards for OOHHC 2011
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act)

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2. Version control and change history

Approved by:	CEO	Approval date:	April 2019
Date Effective:	April 2019	Next Review Due:	2022
Contact for Queries:	People and Practice		

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	2014	CEO	Original version
2.0	2019	CEO	Update to new policy template. Procedural information moved into separate procedure document. Extensive revision of content.
2.01	Minor change	EM P&P	Amend review timeframe.
2.02	Minor change	EM P&P	Clarified that complaints from external bodies are to be addressed to relevant Executive Manager and Cc to complaints@barnardos.org.au
2.03	Minor change	Acting EM P&P	Added ACT Human Services Registrar to ACT external oversight bodies.
2.04	Minor change	Acting EM P&P	Updating external oversight bodies contact details.