

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 readily available on Barnardos website 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

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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, acknowledge and when a complaint is made• We endeavour to continuously improve our service delivery• Staff are supported with training and resources to receive and manage complaints• Complaints are investigated, documented and reviewable• The outcome is communicated to the complainant
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• The identity of complainants is protected, where this is appropriate• The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will apply• Decisions are reviewable 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.• Systems are in place to record, identify trends, monitor timeliness of responses, 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, Senior Manager or Regional Manager (depending on the program)
3. If your concerns remain you can then proceed to contact the Barnardos General Manager for the respective area
4. If your complaint hasn't been resolved, you can raise it with the Executive Leader (EL) or by emailing complaints@barnardos.org.au
5. The CEO of Barnardos is available to resolve complaints, if the EL hasn't been able to Please email: complaints@barnardos.org.au

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How Practice Quality will manage complaints received to the mailbox:

complaints@barnardos.org.au

Complaints to the Barnardos complaints email are automatically directed to Practice Quality Executive Leader and Administration and Project Support Officer. Practice Quality will acknowledge the email to the person who lodged the complaint and subsequently direct the complaint to the relevant General Manager to investigate and respond.

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 oversight agency in the ACT and NSW are listed below.

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

ACT external oversight agencies	NSW external oversight agencies
<p>Human Rights Commission (HRC) (for services for children and young people and people with a disability) Address: Level 1, 5 Constitution Ave, Canberra City ACT 2601 Phone: 02 6205 2222 TTY: 02 6205 1666 Email: human.rights@act.gov.au Web: 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 1, 5 Constitution Avenue Canberra City ACT 2601 Phone: 02 6205 2222 Email: PublicAdvocateReferral@act.gov.au Web: https://hrc.act.gov.au/public-advocate/</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. Web: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/ NDIS Form: Complaint Contact Form</p>

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<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 NSW 2001 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: 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: www.education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education</p>

Note: References and Related Information see **Complaints Policy Appendix**