

## Our People

### Members and Stakeholders

# Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

<i>Authorised by - Name (Role):</i>	<i>Date Authorised:</i>
<i>The Board</i>	<i>14 April 2026</i>
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<i>Summary of changes:</i>	
<i>First biennial review – full policy and procedure review. Added new sections: Unreasonable conduct, Anonymous complaints, Education and Training. Expanded Assessment and added risk levels and added a new overall process flowchart.</i>	

## Policy Statement

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (NHT) is committed to providing a safe, transparent, and accountable environment for people to provide feedback about NHT operations. This includes matters relating to service delivery, communication, governance, advocacy, and the conduct of NHT staff, volunteers and Board Members.

NHT recognises that complaints often arise when expectations are not met, or when information is unavailable, unclear, misleading, incomplete or not provided in a timely manner. NHT values feedback as an opportunity to strengthen relationships, improve our practices, and strengthen trust. Feedback is seen as a constructive part of maintaining integrity and excellence in all aspects of our work.

# Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Purpose

This policy ensures NHT manages feedback and complaints fairly, efficiently and consistently in accordance with good governance principles and the *NHT Grant Deed – Special Condition 7 – Performance feedback and complaints resolution procedures*.

This policy does not apply to complaints about individual Neighbourhood houses, funding bodies or external organisations.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff (paid and volunteer), contractors, and Board Members, and covers external feedback or complaints relating to NHT:

- services and support
- communication and information
- advocacy and representation
- events, training and meetings (including the NHT Conference)
- policies, decisions and governance practices.
- conduct of NHT staff, volunteers or Board Members

This policy does not replace grievance, disciplinary or legal processes.

Internal feedback and complaints are managed according to the *Human Resources Policy and Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedure*.

## Definitions

**Feedback** – comments, opinions, or concerns provided to or about NHT where a response is *not* requested or required.

**Complaint** – an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about NHT, its services, staff, or complaint handling process, where a response or resolution is expected or legally required.

**Dispute** – a complaint that remains unresolved after reasonable efforts and is escalated either within NHT or referred to an external party.

**Grievance** – a formal workplace complaint made by a staff member managed under the *Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedure*.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### CEO / Board Chair

- Promote a positive feedback culture.
- Ensure resources and support for complaint handling.
- Report trends to the Board and support improvements.

### Staff Handling Complaints

- Follow this policy and treat people with respect.
- Assist people to make complaints.
- Manage complaints confidentially and objectively.

- Provide feedback to the CEO/Board on emerging issues.

### All Staff

- Treat feedback providers respectfully.
- Inform people how to make a complaint.
- Refer complaints promptly.

### Board

- Receive de-identified reports.
- Oversee governance, risk and serious complaints.

## Principles

It is the policy of NHT that:

- **feedback is encouraged** from all members, participants, employees and other stakeholders.
- **feedback is valued** and acknowledged as key opportunities for improvement.
- people providing feedback are treated with respect and not adversely affected because an issue or complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
- **NHT assess each piece of feedback on its merits, respond efficiently and fairly** and keep those involved up to date with progress.
- actual or perceived conflicts of interest are identified and managed responsibly in line with the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.
- NHT staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible.
- complaints are managed confidentially, and personal information is only used or disclosed in line with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

### Unreasonable conduct

NHT understands that complaints can sometimes be challenging, however, bullying, aggression, abusive language or unreasonable behaviour towards our staff or representatives will not be tolerated. NHT will take steps to manage unreasonable conduct to protect the psychosocial safety and wellbeing of staff, ensure a respectful environment, and maintain a fair complaints process for everyone involved. Where necessary, communication may be limited or redirected, and in serious cases, the interaction may be ceased to ensure safety.

Also refer to the *Psychosocial Safety Procedure*.

## Process Flowchart

Feedback Encouraged

- Verbally - in person or by phone
- Written - email, letter or NHT Website Contact Form, Feedback and Complaints Form or NHT Survey
- Via an advocate or support person.
- Anonymous complaints are accepted where sufficient information is provided to allow assessment and follow up.

Acknowledgement

- Receipt acknowledged as soon as practicable.
- Provider informed of overall process and expected timeframes.
- Provider advised as soon as possible when NHT is unable to deal with any part of their complaint and any available options for referral or further action.
- **If anyone is in immediate danger call 000.**

Assessment and Escalation

- **Low Risk** = minor issues that are easily resolved - **Frontline Resolution.**
- **Medium Risk** = matters that are more complex or may require investigation - **Escalation to Senior Staff Member or CEO.**
- **High Risk** = serious matters, mandatory reports, serious criminal misconduct, legal, ethical or safety risk - **Escalation to CEO, Board President or external body.**
- Dealing with Disputes and Complaints (under development).

Follow Up Actions

- Actions are taken promptly to address issues and support improvement, and are based on procedural fairness
- Provider informed of progress, their likely involvement and possible or likely outcomes
- Provider advised as soon as possible when NHT unable to meet proposed timeframes and reasons for delay.

Resolution

- Provider advised of final outcome, the reasons for decisions and any available options for review or further action (if applicable).
- Details documented in Feedback Register.

Review and Reporting

- Feedback is discussed at Operational Team Meetings
- De-identified summaries are provided to the Board to review trends and identify systemic improvements.

## Encouraging and Facilitating Feedback

NHT ensures our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

Children and young people are encouraged to give feedback where they have interacted with NHT. Refer to the [Child and Youth Safety Policy](#).

NHT provides several ways members and other stakeholders can provide feedback, including complaints, compliments and suggestions.

NHT encourages issues to be raised early so they can be addressed effectively.

People can provide feedback or complaints:

- verbally - in person or by phone)
- in writing – by email, letter, [NHT website contact form](#) or [Feedback and Complaints Form](#)
- through an advocate or support person

Details are recorded along with any supporting information on the [Feedback and Complaints Form](#).

The record includes:

- Contact information (if provided) of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised and the preferred outcome/s.
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any support the person making a complaint requires.

Where a complainant chooses to be represented or supported by another person or organisation, NHT will communicate through their nominated representative with the complainant's consent.

## Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be accepted where sufficient information is provided to allow assessment or investigation.

## Acknowledgement

NHT is committed to managing people's expectations, and will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint as soon as practicable and informs the person providing, of:

- the complaints process
- expected time frames for actions
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.
- their likely involvement in the process, and

NHT advises people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where it may be directed.

NHT will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet proposed time frames and the reasons for the delay.

## Assessment and Escalation

The person receiving the feedback assesses:

- urgency, seriousness and level of risk
  - Risk levels include:
    - **Low**: minor issues that are easily resolved

- **Medium:** matters requiring investigation
- **High:** serious, legal, ethical or safety risks
- need for immediate action – mandatory reporting, high risk, serious misconduct
- who should manage the complaint
  - Complaints regarding:
    - staff are managed by the CEO
    - the CEO are managed by the Board President
    - Board Members are managed by the Board.

whether the Board should be notified

If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated to the CEO or Board President or the appropriate external body.

### **Low risk - Frontline Resolution**

NHT aims to resolve complaints promptly and effectively at the first point of contact. Wherever possible, staff will be supported and authorised to handle complaints directly. This approach allows for quick, informal resolution and ensures that concerns are addressed early.

### **Medium Risk: Escalation to Senior Staff Member or CEO**

If a complaint cannot be resolved at the frontline, it may be escalated to a more senior staff member or the CEO. This second level of complaint handling may involve a formal assessment and possible investigation of the original complaint and any decisions already made.

### **High Risk: Escalation to CEO, Board President or External Body.**

High risk matters include incidents requiring mandatory reporting, serious criminal misconduct, legal, ethical or safety risks and are escalated immediately to the CEO or Board President, or external Body – as outlined in *Dealing with Disputes and Complaints (under development)*.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after internal review, they may pursue an external review of the decision. For example, complaints may be referred to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) or another relevant oversight body, depending on the nature of the issue.

### **Investigation**

Where required, investigations may include record review and consultation with relevant parties. All parties are provided procedural fairness. Outcomes and actions are documents, implemented promptly and communicated to relevant parties.

### **Follow Up Actions**

Follow up actions will be based on procedural fairness and taken as promptly as possible to address issues and support improvement.

All actions and decisions are documented on the *Feedback and Complaints Form* and the people involved are kept informed of progress.

### **Resolution**

At the end of the process people providing feedback will be provided with a clear explanation of the outcome, the reasons for decisions and any available options for review or further action.

### **Records, Review and Reporting**

All feedback and complaints are recorded in the confidential *Feedback Register* including:

- How the complaint was managed

- outcome(s) including follow up actions taken to address the problem identified, improve services provided, or further analysis to identify any underlying or root causes.
- communications with the feedback provider
- Close out date

Feedback is discussed at operational team meetings Data is analysed to identify trends and systemic issues.

Deidentified summaries are provided to the Board quarterly.

## **Education and Training**

Staff who handle complaints are offered specific training to support feeling confident and prepared to respond complaints in a fair, respectful and consistent way.

This training is provided to protect psychosocial safety by reducing stress, preventing misunderstandings, and making sure concerns are managed calmly and appropriately. Our aim is to make the complaints process clear, safe and positive for everyone involved.

## **Compliance**

*NHT Grant Deed – Special Condition 7 – Performance feedback and complaints resolution procedures*

### **Supporting documents:**

- [Feedback and Complaints Form](#)
- *Feedback Register*
- *Child and Youth Safety Policy*

## **References**

*Institute of Community Directors Australia – [Complaints Handling](#) (Jul-25)*