Feedback and Complaints – Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Our purpose is to enable you to live the life you want by partnering with you to bring your NDIS plan to life.

We are committed to providing a high quality and professional service that meets your needs. As an organisation we genuinely welcome and encourage feedback, ideas and suggestions. All feedback is valued and helps us to develop a better service to deliver positive outcomes for achieving your goals.

Our aim is to ensure all complaints about its products and services are managed fairly.

This is a free service to all Plan Partners customers.

Policy Statement

You can expect that we will:

- Actively encourage you (our customers), your family and carers to provide feedback or to raise concerns about any aspect of the service we provide that is not meeting your expectation of quality and professionalism;
- Respect that you, your family and carers will decide how, when and where you wish to make a complaint;
- Provide you with ongoing information about our feedback and complaints policy and processes that are accessible and easily understood;
- Provide the option and capability to remain anonymous throughout the process;
- Protect your privacy during and after you raise a complaint;
- Resolve your complaint in a confidential, fair, and timely manner with personal views respected;
- Help you to find a support person or advocate to assist or represent you if you choose;
- Inform you of your right to make a complaint to a regulatory body or authority such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (**NDIS Commission**). Support your participation, identify your desired outcome, and keep you and your nominated representatives informed of all decisions and the reasons for those decisions;
- Ensure that there are no negative consequences or disadvantage to you or your supporters as a result of the complaint or expressed view;

- Use our feedback and complaints review process to inform and direct continuous improvement across the organisation; and
- Facilitate access to alternate formats and information, such as: Easy English made available upon request.

Scope

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (**NDIS Act**) and its relevant standards relate to the provision of disability services for people with a disability and recognise the role of your family, friends, carers and advocates.

This Policy relates to all activities of Plan Partners. Each area of Plan Partners is required to take responsibility for ensuring full understanding of the commitments outlined in this Policy and implement relevant systems, procedures, workflows and other strategies that will direct the development of Plan Partners' culture of customer service.

This Policy applies to all volunteers, contractors, agents, visitors, consultants, whilst they are on Plan Partners premises or providing any service to Plan Partners' customers, their family or carers.

Where a complaint meets the criteria of a critical or reportable incident, Plan Partners will manage the incident according to the lawful direction of the NDIS Commission, or any other regulatory body or authority.

Application

All relevant Plan Partners' employees (ongoing, temporary, casual, contractors and volunteers) are required to respond to complaints. The response must be in accordance with the principles outlined in this Policy.

For the purposes of this Policy the following are excluded from its scope as they are dealt with by other specific management processes and supporting policies that are available through Plan Partners, such as:

- Staff grievances;
- Staff concerns about a client's welfare;
- Appeals against a decision made about eligibility to receive services, complaints from service providers regarding its contractual arrangements with Plan Partners or complaints about other service providers;
- Feedback and/or criticism for which a response is not expected;
- Incident related matters;
- Fraud and corruption;
- Abuse and negligence; and
- Protected disclosures and requests for service or information.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Ensure that Plan Partners facilitates and proactively manages your feedback about the service you receive, creating a partnership where you, your family and carers feel safe and supported to complain and express a view point, how and when you want with the assistance you choose;
- Ensure that you, your family and your carers are aware of your rights, responsibilities and Plan Partners responsibilities; and
- Comply with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework, NDIS Practice Standards, and all relevant state and/or territory legislation.

Plan Partners' complaint management system is intended to:

- Ensure that complaints are managed fairly, efficiently, and effectively;
- Reflect our commitment to a person centred and rights-based approach;
- Help staff to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in managing and responding to complaints;
- Support staff/customers and their support networks to identify where assistance may be needed to submit a complaint or feedback, and act appropriately; and
- Provide information to help us improve how we work.

Definition

As with the NDIS Commission, Plan Partners adopts the Australian Standard – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (AS/NZS 10002:2022) definition of a complaint provided by as an:

'Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is expected or legally required.'

Where feedback is provided outside of the definition above this may be recorded as 'feedback', a 'suggestion' or a 'compliment', as applicable.

Specific Responsibilities

Management

- All feedback and complaints received will be used to inform and improve the Policy and our business practices.
- Responsible steps are taken that any person who makes a complaint is advised how to make a complaint to the NDIS Commission and is supported to make contact with the NDIS Commission if they feel their complaint has not been resolved by us.
- Plan Partners' Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring all team members are trained on this Policy.

Employees

All Plan Partners employees will:

- Be trained in the appropriate management of complaints, including how to support our customers to resolve their complaints.
- Receive customer feedback and complaints and raise directly with management.
- Be informed of the expectations of the NDIS and NDIS Commission regarding complaints management and handling.
- Follow the feedback and complaints process described in this Policy.

Participants/Customers

- Customers are expected to communicate with our team politely.
- Customers will be informed of their rights to complain and how to make a formal complaint when they first become a customer of Plan Partners, as outlined and provided in our Customer Service Agreement.
- Customers will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint, the proposed resolution and why this decision has been made.
- Customers will be provided with the contact details of the NDIS Commission and helped to make the complaint if asked to do so.

Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Plan Partners takes complaints about our services very seriously. We consider any expression of dissatisfaction about our services, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected, as a complaint.

This Policy is designed to ensure Plan Partners provides the highest levels of customer service in relation to our complaints handling processes.

Complaint Types

- Complaints can be in relation to:
- Service delivery (quality, reliability, responsiveness etc.);
- Service access;
- Confidentiality or privacy issues;
- policy; or
- Staff issues (performance, capability, behavior, attitude):
- Any other concerns.

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint and/or feedback may be lodged by:

- The person who received the service;
- A nominated representative, for example, a family member's guardian or carer; or
- A recognised advocate of the person who received the service.

A person may choose to lodge a complaint anonymously.

Lodging a Complaint

If you wish to lodge a complaint, or if you have an issue which requires clarification, we encourage you to contact us directly by calling us or through our live chat.

However, if your complaint remains unresolved after speaking to us, we provide a number of options for our customers to lodge a complaint.

Complaints can be made in several ways including;

- In person;
- By phone;
- Via our live chat; or
- In writing via letter or email.

Plan Partners will support you to make a complaint, for example if required we can arrange an interpreter for you using TIS National Translating services (this includes AUSLAN).

Complaints can be lodged via:

- Website: www.planpartners.com.au/feedback
- Email: info@planpartners.com.au
- Mail: Plan Partners, Level 21, 360 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
- Phone: 1300 333 700

For Telephone Interpreting Service:

Via Phone: 131 450*

*When using this service remember to have your NDIS number ready.

You may wish to have an advocate or someone to support you or to act on your behalf to make a complaint. There are several disability advocacy services that provide this kind of assistance. The Ask Izzy - Disability Advocacy Finder can help you find independent advocacy services near you.

Anonymous Complaints

We accept anonymous complaints or feedback.

We will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

We will follow the same process for all complaints, but with anonymous complaints there may not be sufficient information to enable a complete investigation to be conducted.

Anonymous complaints can be lodged via:

- Phone: 1300 333 700
- Email: privacy@planpartners.com.au

Receiving Complaints

Plan Partners employees will record and deal with complaints including understanding of what action can be taken to resolve the complaint. Complaints that cannot be resolved at the first point of contact (i.e. over the phone or via live chat) require an acknowledgement either verbally or in writing (i.e. by email or letter) that you will receive an acknowledgement within one (1) business day advising of the requirement of ongoing investigation.

When complaints are received verbally, we will:

- Provide you with an explanation of the events that occurred, if known at the time;
- Comprehensively record the conversation and concerns, along with all necessary details (names, date issue first arose, etc) into the customer relations management system – including where the complaint is resolved;
- Identify the issues for resolution, including the key concerns raised by you;
- Clarify with you directly, if any issue is unclear;
- Know when to escalate the complaint to a team leader or manager;
- Advise of the complaints handling process; and
- Commence handling the complaint if appropriate.
-

When complaints are received in writing, we will;

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint by providing written confirmation of receipt; and
- Follow the procedural points above.
- In all cases Plan Partners can accept anonymous complaints and we will investigate these as far as possible.

Information Collection

The Plan Partners representative will collect relevant information including:

- Name of person making the complaint (on behalf of yourself or someone else), if the complainant is not anonymous;
- Preferred method of return contact;
- Where the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, you may provide a preference of how you would like to receive this feedback;
- Details of the complaint and any parties involved; and
- Preference of outcome.

Recording Complaints

All Plan Partners staff are responsible for entering complaints information in our customer relations management system when a complaint is received, including complaints received and immediately resolved.

Information captured includes:

- The date and nature of the complaint;
- The action/investigation taken;
- The date of resolution and reason for the decision made;
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome; and
- Complainant response and further outcome, if relevant.

Investigating the Complaint

All complaints require, to a greater or lesser degree, an investigation to determine what has happened and what course of action is needed in response.

The person(s) investigating the complaint will not be the subject of the complaint.

Complaints will be handled by people who have the appropriate skills and authority to resolve or investigate complaints and, where appropriate, provide remedies and identify improved practices.

The person managing the complaint will consider:

- What information is required and where to source it;
- How it should be collected (system's review, phone call, document review etc);
- What you would like to resolve the issue, in what time frame, and if we can reasonably meet this expectation; and
- How a response should be communicated to the you (verbally, email, letter etc).

Procedural Fairness / Open Disclosure

Plan Partners requires fair and proper procedure prior to any decision being reached in regard to a complaint.

Following investigation, Plan Partners will provide the complainant;

- An unbiased and genuine consideration of their account;
- An opportunity to reply in a way that is appropriate for the circumstances;
- The opportunity for their reply to be received and considered before the final outcome;
- All relevant information before preparing their reply; and
- A description of the possible decision; and the criteria for making that decision and information on which any such decision would be based.

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Personal information, the identity of the complainant, and any people who are the subject of a complaint, is kept confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint and any follow up actions. This information is kept for a period of seven years. Only relevant Plan Partners staff have visibility of complaint records.

Responding to Complaints

Actions taken to resolve a complaint must be based on the evidence/issues raised by you and be informed by the principles of fairness, respect, and transparency.

All complaints require, to a greater or lesser degree, an investigation to determine what has happened and an appropriate course of action.

If we cannot resolve your complaint at first point of contact Plan Partners' endeavour to, where possible, resolve complaints within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint.

External Disputes Resolution

Plan Partners remains committed to continuous improvement and resolution of its complaints wherever possible. However, customers and representatives always maintain the right to escalate complaints to external parties including the NDIS Commission, State Governing Bodies and external advocacy services.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint, you are not satisfied with the final resolution offered by us in attempting to resolve your complaint or you seek further follow up, we can assist with information regarding a number of options for you to lodge a complaint with an external agency including the following:

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Phone: 1800 035 544

Website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Phone: 1300 362 072

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

Disability Services Commissioner

Phone: 1800 677 342

Website: www.odsc.vic.gov.au

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Phone: 1800 880 052

Website: www.jobaccess.gov.au

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually or as otherwise appropriate.

Legislation, Standards and Agreements

This Policy recognises various legislation, standards and agreements, including, but are not limited to:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Quality Indicators for NDIS Practice Standards) Guidelines 2018
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- Privacy Act 1988
- Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)
- United Nations Convention of The Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Australian Standard – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (AS/NZS 10002:2022)

Reviewed and Adopted by the PSS, Chief Executive Officer on July 2024

Document Owner	PSS Head of Risk and Strategy
Reviewed and Adopted by	PSS Chief Executive Officer
Version Control	Version 3.1 – February 2026
Last Reviewed	February 2026
Approved	February 2026
Policy Review Frequency	Annually
Audience	Plan Partners Internal and Public
Publication	Internal (Intranet) and Public (Plan Partners Website)