

Purpose of this policy

RDA Tasmania is committed to creating a safe, fair, inclusive and enjoyable environment for everyone involved with our Association.

RDA invites you to provide feedback so we can resolve any issues and have the opportunity to create a better service.

It is recognised, that on occasions inappropriate behaviours may occur and that a complaints and grievance process is required to resolve complaints or concerns. This policy aims to ensure that complaints and grievances are handled and resolved in an appropriate, fair, transparent and timely manner.

Responsibilities

This policy applies to all people involved with the activities of RDA, including staff, volunteers and members. Any person (complainant) may report a complaint about a person, people or organisation bound by this policy.

In the first instance we advise that you try to resolve the complaint with the person that you have the issue with. However, we understand that sometimes this is not possible.

If you wish to make a complaint and you are uncomfortable approaching the person, you can approach a Coach, a Centre Committee Member, the State Office or our Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). <https://www.rdatas.org.au/complaints>

The responsibility for resolving an informal or formal complaint rests with the RDA Centre Committee if the complaint is at Centre Level. If this is not possible or reasonable, or if the complaint is at State Level, then it will be resolved by the RDA Tasmania Board. In serious cases it can be directed to RDA Australia.

For further information regarding complaint procedures refer to the RDA National Member Protection Policy which outlines National complaints procedures and is available on both the RDA Tasmania and RDA Australia websites. (<https://www.rdatas.org.au/policies-and-procedures> and <http://www.rda.org.au/policies-and-procedures.aspx>)

Guiding Principles

- Fairness - RDA will approach all complaints with fairness and impartiality.
- No disadvantage - A person making a complaint will not be disadvantaged by making a complaint.
- Confidentiality - All complaints will maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all persons concerned.
- Timeliness - The resolution of complaints will be completed in a timely manner and in accordance with current policies and procedures.
- Transparency - All complaints and their resolutions will be recorded in the Complaints Register and minuted in the Centre and/or State Board minutes.

Procedure

RDA will endeavour to deal with complaints on a confidential basis.

RDA will deal with complaints on a confidential basis; however, it may be necessary to provide the details of the complaint to the person against whom the complaint has been

made. This is to ensure fairness and gives the person against who the complaint was made an opportunity to be heard, this ensures everyone is given procedural fairness.

Support and guidance will be offered to all parties involved in the complaint.

Before making an official complaint

- 1) As a first step you should try to resolve the problem with the person(s) involved. You should only do this if it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to approach the other person(s) and you feel confident and comfortable to discuss the issues with them.
- 2) If this is not reasonable or you are not sure how to handle the problem by yourself, or the problem continues after you tried to approach the person or people involved, you can talk to your Coach, Volunteer Coordinator or someone on the Centre Committee (if at Centre Level) or the State Office or State Executive Officer.
- 3) After talking to someone you may decide:
 - that there is no problem;
 - the problem is minor and you do not wish to take the matter further;
 - you may wish to attempt to work out your own resolution (with or without a support person); or
 - you may wish to seek an informal mediated resolution with the help of a third person (such as a mediator).
- 4) If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you may choose to make a formal complaint in writing to the Centre Committee, State EO or seek advice from the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). A Complaint Registration Form is available on our website or on request from the RDA Tasmania Office. (See link below in point 1)

Acknowledge → Assess → Plan → Investigate →

Respond → Resolve → Record → Improve → Follow up

1) Acknowledgement of the complaint received

- A complaint may be made in person by phone or in writing.
- A complaint may be made anonymously.
- Any complaint raised will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Any complaint will only be discussed with the appropriate person(s) and kept confidential.
- If a complaint has been received in writing, you will receive an acknowledgement in a timely manner and someone will contact you usually within 3 business days.
- An accurate and detailed record will be made, including your contact details (unless anonymous), the name/details of the person(s) involved and the person(s) you are complaining about, date(s), details of the incident(s), details of any witnesses, etc. You will be asked to fill out the Complaints Registration Form and sign it if it is a formal complaint. (<https://www.rdatas.org.au/complaints-registration-form>)
- The person listening to your complaint will check with you to make sure they understand the complaint and know all the facts. All information and discussion will be recorded promptly and accurately. Sometimes it may be referred to a more appropriate person to follow up with you, depending on the complexity of the complaint.
- You will be informed about the process.
- You will be informed that complaints may be made directly to the NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Commission <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints> or by phoning them on 1800 035 544.

2) Assessment of the complaint

- Your complaint will be forwarded to the relevant person(s) who will be dealing with your complaint. For more complicated complaints, this is usually the Centre Committee or State Board.

- Your complaint will be checked for details such as severity, potential impact, complexity and priority.
- For simple complaints, a response can be expected within 10 business days. For more complex complaints, it may take more than 30 business days to receive a response.

3) Planning and investigation of the complaint

More complex complaints may require further planning and investigation. This may include:

- supporting documentation;
- statements from witness(es);
- seeking other/additional evidence; and
- seeking a response from the person(s) the complaint is about to ensure procedural fairness and natural justice.

4) Respond

- All complaints will be responded to within 3 business days (unless no contact details have been provided) and you will be informed if a response should take longer than that and the estimated time frame of that response.
- You will be kept appropriately informed of the progress of the complaint, including any actions taken, the reasons for any decisions made and options for review of decisions.
- You will be kept appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint.

5) Resolve and record

- All complaints and resolutions will be recorded in the Complaints Register of each Centre dealing with the complaint and/or the State Association's Complaints Register if relevant.
- All complaints and resolutions will be properly minuted in the Centre Committee and/or Board meeting minutes.
- All sensitive and/or confidential complaints will be excluded from the meeting minutes, but instead recorded in a separate report, usually, but not necessarily, prepared by the Centre Secretary and/or State EO and approved by the committee and/or Board as per usual approval of minutes.
- All steps taken to resolve the complaint and its outcome will be recorded in the minutes or separate report.
- All records will be stored confidentially and kept for a minimum of 7 years.

6) Improve

- The Centre and/or State management will reflect on the complaint and resolution. Are there any concerns? What corrective actions need to be taken now? How well was the complaint handled? What preventative measures can be taken? Is there a pattern? Has it been resolved in the past, how?
- Identify and address potential problems before they become formal grievances.
- Any changes/improvements need to be documented and results monitored.
- Any results need to be reviewed after an agreed time – these decisions need to be documented, including the recommendation to review any policies and procedures.

7) Follow up

- Depending on the type of complaint someone may follow up with you.
- Do you have any further concern? Are you satisfied with the outcome?
- Would you like to provide any further feedback?

8) Still dissatisfied?

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to request information on how to appeal.
- You can either contact the EO of RDA Tasmania (if the complaint was at Centre level) or the EO of RDA Australia.
- You can also contact the MPIO, who can provide you with more information, including the right to contact the relevant external authority. The MPIO's details are available on our website.

Definitions

Appeal: A request made to a court of law or to a person in authority or a relevant body to change a previous decision.

Centre Committee: The body of elected members who are responsible for the management of the Centre.

Complain: Express dissatisfaction, state a grievance concerning a particular issue.

Complaint: The act of complaining, a grievance which is a cause of dissatisfaction.

Complainant: Person making the complaint.

EO: Executive Officer.

Grievance: Real or perceived cause for complaint.

MPIO: Member Protection Information Officer.

Connected Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

Available on request or <https://www.rdatas.org.au/policies-and-procedures>

Member Protection Policy

Inclusion Policy

Grievance Procedure

Authorised by: RDA Tasmania Board

Sign off: Approved RDA Tasmania Centre Delegates through email 16/04/2020
Ratified by RDA Tasmania Board in meeting 16/04/2020

Review date: April 2023

COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE FOR RDA PERSONNEL

Key points to remember when receiving a complaint:

- **Listen to the complaint** – Accept ownership of the problem. Apologise. Don't blame others. Thank the person for bringing the problem to your attention.
- **Be understanding** – Remember, the person is not complaining about you personally. Be calm, cheerful and helpful.
- **Make sure you have all the facts** – Check that you understand the details and ask questions if necessary. Write it all down!
- **Keep your promises** – Don't promise anything you can't deliver. It is better to under-promise and over-deliver.
- **Be quick – Escalation occurs if not resolved quickly!**

REMEMBER: RECORD, REPORT AND COMMUNICATE ALL ACTIONS AND STEPS

ACKNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give one (1) person responsibility for managing the complaint from beginning to end, so the complainant does not have to repeat their complaint to different people! • If receiving by (e)mail – forward to the person who needs to deal with it. !!! ACKNOWLEDGE receipt immediately !!! • RESPOND/CONTACT the complainant within 3 business days – explain process and timelines for response and follow the points below. • Apply the key points under 'when receiving a complaint'! • Inform them that complaints may be made directly to the NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Commission. • Ask questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Their details ○ Name and details of other person(s) involved ○ Name (and details) of person(s) complaining about ○ Date(s) the incident(s) happened ○ Details of the incident(s) ○ Details of any witness(es) ○ Make sure you have all the facts and understand the details correctly. Ask questions and record answers. • Has this complaint been raised with the person(s) the complaint is about? If yes, what was the outcome? • If it is a formal complaint – send the complaints form to the person to fill out and sign. Also available on our website. • You <i>may</i> want to ask (if appropriate) how they want it resolved. • If you are not the person who will be dealing with the complaint – forward the complaint to the correct person and ADVISE the complainant you will do this and their name and position if known. • REMEMBER - BE QUICK – if complaints take several days to resolve or are forgotten, they can escalate! • Record promptly, accurately and detailed.
ASSESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward the complaint to the relevant people – usually the Centre Committee or State Board for more complex or serious complaints or where there is conflict of interest. • Check the complaint for severity, potential impact, complexity and priority. • A simple complaint should be responded to in the shortest time-frame possible and within business 10 days. • Complex complaints may take more time to work through. Make sure you keep the complainant informed of time-frames and process and if any delays. Respond immediately after the complaint has been discussed in the next

	<p>committee or Board meeting. You may need to set a separate meeting to discuss the complaint if a scheduled meeting is too long (too far?).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REMEMBER - BE QUICK – escalation occurs if not resolved quickly!
<p>PLANNING AND INVESTIGATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan your complaint, response and resolution. • Investigate any serious and/or more complex complaints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seek other/additional evidence ○ Talk to witness(es) and/or ask for their statement(s) ○ Contact the person(s) the complaint is about and explain the process to them – ask for a response • Decide what steps need to be taken to resolve the issue(s) and action those steps promptly. • Remember that both complainant and respondent need your support. • Set a time frame for your planning and stick to it! • Keep communicating with all parties – especially if more time is needed for a response/resolution. • Record promptly, accurately and detailed.
<p>RESPOND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All complaints need to be responded to within 3 business days in writing. • Inform all parties of any delays of estimated time frame. Try to stick to the initial time frame given to the complainant as much as possible to prevent escalation. • Keep your promises! Better to under-promise and over-deliver!
<p>RESOLVE AND RECORD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all complaints and resolutions in the Complaint Register of your Centre. • Forward your updated Complaint Register to the State Office. • Minute all complaints and resolutions or if sensitive/confidential in a separate report that also needs to be approved for accuracy like the minutes. • Make sure all records include all steps taken to resolve the complaint. • Store all complaints and the register confidentially and keep at least 7 years.
<p>IMPROVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the complaint and resolution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any concerns? ○ What corrective action should be taken? ○ How well was the complaint handled? ○ What preventative measures can be taken? ○ Was it an exception or is there a pattern? ○ Has this or a similar complaint been resolved in the past – how? • Identify and address potential problems before they become formal grievances. • Agree on a time to review results – document these decisions. • Check the need to review and update any policies and procedures. • Document all changes/improvements and monitor results. • Approve and sign off any decisions.
<p>FOLLOW UP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with the complainant – are they satisfied with the outcome? • Let the complainant know what has been done to avoid the problem in the future. • Are there any further concerns? • Are they happy to provide any further feedback?
<p>STILL DISSATISFIED?</p>	<p>If the complainant is still not satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise them that they have the right to appeal. • Explain the appeal process. • Send them the RDA National Member Protection Policy. • Give them the details of the State EO (or National EO if it was a complaint handled by the State Body). • Give them the details of the MPIO on the website. • Advise them of their right to contact a relevant external authority.