



Peninsula Community
Legal Centre Inc

Service User's Complaints Procedure

You have a right to make a complaint about the services or treatment received from staff or volunteers at the centre. Initial complaints may be made in the following ways:

1. In the first instance, by speaking directly to the relevant Program Manager or the worker in charge either in person or by telephone; or
2. If not satisfied with action taken or if the complaint is about the Program Manager, by speaking directly to the Chief Executive Officer either in person or by telephone; or
3. If the person is not satisfied with action taken by the Chief Executive Officer or if the complaint is regarding to the Chief Executive Officer, by sending a written complaint to the President of the Management Committee.

Clients are also advised that complaints about lawyers can also be made to the Law Institute of Victoria.

Verbal complaints will be followed up and acted upon, as appropriate to the circumstances, by the relevant Program Manager and/or the Chief Executive Officer.

All written complaints will be addressed at the next Management Committee meeting. The Management Committee will investigate the complaint, will decide how to respond and will ensure that action is taken. As far as possible, action taken should be consistent with action taken previously in relation to similar matters. The service user will be advised of what action is being/ has been taken to resolve the complaint, in writing, by the Management Committee.

All complaints will be dealt with:

- Seriously
- Promptly
- Confidentially
- In a manner which ensures that the principles of natural justice are applied to both the person making the complaint and the person about whom the complaint has been made.

Copies of written complaints and details of all actions taken are kept and securely maintained by the Chief Executive Officer.

Principles of Natural Justice

Natural justice is a concept used to ensure that proper procedures are followed to allow a fair hearing of complaints. The concept requires that a person must be aware of matters which will affect them, be provided with a reasonable timeframe and opportunity in which to present their case, and any decision or outcome must be free of bias.

The following principles of natural justice apply to the handling of any complaint:

- The person who is subject of concern must know all the allegations in relation to their behaviour and they must have a full opportunity to put their case.
- All parties to the complaint have a right to be heard.
- All relevant submissions and evidence must be considered.
- The employer must not take into account matters that are not relevant.
- The person who makes the complaint must not determine the outcome.
- The decision-maker(s) must be fair and just.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre recognises that service users have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that, for some people, this may limit the ease or confidence with which they are able to utilise feedback and complaints procedures.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre will seek to prevent and/or address disadvantage which may be encountered by service users in providing feedback or making complaints through:

- Where possible, having relevant documents translated in other languages.
- Assisting service users to access interpreter services as required.
- Encouraging service users to obtain assistance and support from other relevant organisations and individuals.
- Incorporating flexibility into feedback and complaints processes where this may be required.
- Provision of training to workers, with the aim of ensuring that the culture and practice of the organisation is sensitive and responsive to the particular needs of service users.