

Complaints Management Policy and Procedure

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1. Objective of the Policy

Feedback, including complaints, suggestions and compliments, are welcomed and important to us as they assist us to improve our products, services and customer service. We recognise, respect and encourage the rights of people to raise complaints and give feedback without fear.

We regularly ask for feedback about our services through surveys, service reviews, formal customer consultation meetings and encouraging informal feedback from customers and suppliers.

We are committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of our customers or potential customers and to resolving your complaint as quickly as possible. How feedback or complaints are given will not affect how quickly we respond to you or the result of the response.

The objective of this policy is to ensure:

- You are aware of our complaint lodgement and handling processes;
- Both you and our staff understand our complaints handling process;
- Your complaint is investigated impartially in a fair and transparent way with a balanced view of all information and evidence, instead of speculation or suspicion;
- We take reasonable steps to actively protect your personal information; and
- Your complaint is considered on its merits taking into account individual circumstances and needs.

Complaints about services received are handled in line with relevant legislation.

This Policy does not cover an Employee grievance. These should be lodged and managed by following our Grievance Policy and Procedure.

2. Definition of a complaint?

In this policy, a complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer relating to a travel service provided by Supported Travel Experiences (STX).

3. Who needs to know about this policy?

- All Supported Travel Experiences staff
- All Supported Travel Experiences customers

4. Equity and Access Considerations

For the communication and implementation of this policy:

- All actions and decisions are made thinking about the age, culture, disability, language, religion, gender and sexuality of older people, people with a disability, their carers and advocates.
- Information is communicated and feedback is asked for in user friendly formats to suit the needs of customers, families, carers and target groups in the community.
- We train staff who work with children to consider their vulnerability and listen carefully to any complaints they make as they may not use adult “complaint” language.
- Our staff can speak to specialist resources when handling complaints from Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, or people from different cultural and language backgrounds. Interpreters can be found through the QLD Government Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS).
- Any person making a complaint to us has the right to ask an advocate to assist them. Our staff will tell the person making the complaint that they have the right to involve an advocate and make all efforts to help them find an appropriate advocate if requested. A list of advocacy services is available in the Help Us Improve Our Service brochure.
- When a child or young person makes a complaint, our staff will offer to find a support person to help them during the complaint process.
- Our staff will ask for the person making the complaint permission before referring them to an interpreter or advocate.
- The Complaints and Feedback Notification Form and Help Us Improve Our Service brochure are available to everyone on our website under “Feedback”.
- Our staff can use different communication methods to add to or replace speech or writing for people with impairments. These methods include the display of text, large print, tactile communication, easy English, accessible multimedia and accessible information and communications technology.

5. Cultural inclusiveness and diversity

Employees make sure services are provided with sensitivity to and awareness of the beliefs and practices of customers from different cultural and language backgrounds. This includes the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

Communication about this policy should be done in a way that suits each individual with respect to their cultural background. For example, use of an interpreter.

We use the advice and guidance of key community members and organisations to strengthen relationships with people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

We develop connections with culturally appropriate organisations and groups to encourage the meaningful participation of people with a disability.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Directors

- Encourage an environment where complaints are handled seriously and thoroughly.
- Make sure an effective, fair and transparent complaint management system is developed and in place.
- Make sure appropriate resources are available and used for effective complaint management.
- Regular reporting on complaint trends and risks to make recommendations for improvements at an individual, service or organisational level.
- Make sure appropriate actions are implemented to prevent similar problems from occurring.
- The final review and approval of this policy.
- Promote the STX Complaints Management Policy and Procedure to staff and customers.
- Show on-going improvement of the complaint management system.
- Show a positive attitude towards solving complaints and encouraging customers and staff to feel confident about raising issues.
- Support staff if a complaint has been raised against them by giving them the chance to respond so their version of events is heard.
- Commit to providing staff training on complaints management.
- Maintain this policy, its related procedures and documents.
- Make sure the policy is effectively implemented in their service.
- Make sure staff follow the requirements of the policy.
- Make sure staff are provided with training and information on the importance of recognising and respecting the legal and human rights of people who use the service.
- Make sure staff are provided with training and information so they are skilled in identifying and addressing risk factors and in responding effectively and proactively to allegations of abuse or assault.

- Make sure staff are familiar with the requirements of the policy, and have necessary skills, knowledge and ability.

6.2 All Employees and Contractors

- Support our commitment to the timely and fair resolution of complaints.
- Understand complaints, compliments and suggestions are welcomed and are a valued opportunity to improve service.
- Understand their role in receiving, responding to or forwarding complaints.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of the person making the complaint and making sure the information about a complaint will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, within the organisation and externally.
- Review of the STX Complaints Management Policy and Procedure and providing input on ways the process could be improved.
- Follow the requirements of the policy.
- Complete mandatory training in relation to this policy.

7. Our Commitment

We are committed to handling complaints in a fair and open way. Every effort will be made by Supported Travel Experiences (STX) to resolve the complaints it receives to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

If you make a complaint, you can expect that we will:

- tell you what to expect while your complaint is being looked into;
- carry out the complaint handling process in a fair and open way;
- provide reasons for decisions that are made;
- protect your privacy; and
- keep privacy-protected records of all incidents.

For an incident to be reportable, a certain act or event needs to have happened (or alleged to have happened) in connection with the provision of supports or services by STX.

This may include, but not limited to:

- The death of a person with disability
- Serious injury of a person with disability
- Abuse or neglect of a person with disability
- Unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, a person with disability

- Sexual misconduct, committed against, or in the presence of, a person with disability, including grooming of the person with disability for sexual activity
- Unauthorised use of restrictive practices in relation to a person with disability
- Unsatisfactory customer services or associated products.

8. Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint to STX. You do not have to be receiving services from us to make a complaint. You may make a complaint on behalf of someone else. Anonymous complaints will be accepted and investigated as far as possible.

9. How do I make a complaint?

If you are dissatisfied with a travel service provided by us, you should in the first instance consider speaking directly with the staff member/s you have been dealing with. If you are uncomfortable with this or consider the relevant staff member is unable to address your concerns you can lodge a complaint with us by:

- Phone: 1300 200 789
- Email: feedback@supportedtravelx.com.au
- Online: feedback and complaint form on supportedtravelx.com.au or by clicking on the link: <https://forms.gle/7RBcakS3SDKh7Ngh6>
- Post: 20 Wynnum Road, Norman Park, QLD, 4170

Making a complaint about STX directly to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission:

- <https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=PRD00-OCF>

If STX receive your complaint verbally and we consider it appropriate, we may ask you to put your complaint in writing.

We will help you if you need assistance in making a complaint. For example, we can organise an interpreter if you need one.

You may wish to have an advocate or someone to act on your behalf to help you make a complaint. There are a number of advocacy services that provide this kind of help.

Our complaints handling process is free of charge.

10. The information you will need to tell us

When STX are investigating your complaint, we will be relying on information provided by you and information we may already be holding. STX may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.

To help us investigate your complaint quickly and efficiently we will ask you for the following information:

- Your name and contact details;
- The name of the person you have been dealing with about your travel service;
- The nature of the complaint;
- Details of any steps you have already taken to resolve the complaint;
- Details of conversations you may have had with us that may be relevant to your complaint; and
- Copies of any documentation which supports your complaint.

11. Legislation and Standards Compliance

- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- Home and Community Care Act 1985
- Home and Community Care Amending Agreement 1999
- NSW Home Care Service Act 1988
- NSW Youth and Community Services Act 1973
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- NSW Community Services (Complaints, Review and Monitoring) Act 1993 – CS-CRAMA
- NSW Ombudsman Act 1974
- Privacy Act 1988
- NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- NSW Protected Disclosures Act 1994
- NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement 2002-07
- NSW Government Disability Policy Framework
- ACT Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994
- ACT Public Sector Management Act 1994

- ACT Public Service Customer Service Standard Best Practice Complaints Handling Standards
- ACT Children and Young People Act 2008
- ACT Disability Services Act 1998
- ACT Health Records (Privacy and Access Act) 1997
- ACT Ombudsman Act 1989
- ACT Human Rights Act 2004