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External Feedback & Complaints Policy

Purpose

To ensure clear channels exist for feedback from outside the organisation to be received and acted on to improve the effectiveness and quality of Victim Support services and processes.

All processes and documents associated with this policy must align with the intent of this policy and best practice.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints received from persons outside of Victim Support, including:

- **Victims** – regarding services received and/or a volunteer or employee’s conduct or performance;
- **Members of the public and other stakeholders** – regarding services provided and/or a volunteer or employee’s conduct or performance; and
- **Any party** - regarding the Board or Board Member, in relation to any decision, action, or inaction, or regarding an employee’s conduct or performance.

NOTE:

The procedures outlined in this policy do not apply to complaints from members of Local Group Committees. These will be resolved in accordance with the organisation’s document “*How We Work Together.*”

Definition

External Complaint

Victim Support defines an external complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with Victim Support, and employees or a member of the Board) that relates to Victim Support and that requires a formal response'.

Policy (OC-2)

Victim Support is committed to providing the best possible service to victims and other users of its services. Victim Support recognises that complaints form an important part of feedback to the organisation and can contribute to the improvement of Victim Support and its services.

This policy provides a framework to ensure that:

- Complaints are taken seriously and are resolved in a timely and responsive manner;
- Complaints are dealt with in a sensitive, fair, expeditious and professional manner that does not breach the lawful rights of any individual;

- An impartial and consistent approach is followed ensuring parity and uniformity in complaint resolution;
- All individuals involved in a complaint are made aware of the procedures and steps that will be followed; and
- The privacy and confidentiality of all parties, where applicable, will be respected.

Procedure (OC-2.1)

Complaints

All complaints should be directed to the National Quality Manager at complaints@victimsupport.org.nz. The National Quality Manager may need to work, and consult, with others in order to resolve the complaint.

Complaints should include, where possible:

- Viva Reference or Case Number (where applicable);
- Your contact details (so that we can contact you);
- Who the complaint is against;
- What action / behaviour the complaint is in relation to (full description);
- When the action / behaviour occurred. Please provide specific examples where possible.
- Where the complained of action / behaviour took place.
- Any other information that is relevant to the complaint, including whether there may be witnesses who can verify the complained of behaviour.

A complaint should be detailed enough to enable the person alleged to have behaved inappropriately to be informed of the conduct, and to be able to respond to the complaint(s). In order to appropriately resolve and investigate your complaint, it may be necessary for Victim Support to arrange a time to talk with you to discuss the complaint in more detail.

Once a complaint is made, the National Quality Manager, in consultation with others, will assess the complaint and decide the best approach to resolve the complaint. Enquiries may be referred or delegated to another appropriate person to address. The National Quality Manager will liaise with members of the Senior Management Team as necessary to resolve specific complaints and ensure all matters arising from a complaint are appropriately addressed.

All complaints will be treated seriously and will be handled with priority. Victim Support will endeavour to keep complainants updated as it works to resolve the complaint.

All complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Register which is maintained by the National Quality Manager. The Complaints Register will be reviewed regularly for the purpose of identifying any areas for improvement.

Anonymous Complaints

You can remain anonymous when discussing your complaint if you wish, therefore, please let us know if you do not want your identity disclosed. Anonymous complaints will be assessed in the same manner as

other complaints, however, due to the nature of anonymous complaints, and in fairness to all parties, they can only be investigated to the extent reasonably possible.

The Prohibited Disclosures Act 2000 will provide anonymity in some specific circumstances for complaints regarding possible financial wrongdoing, serious ethical breaches, and/or conflict of interest.