



Policy on Customer Complaints and Disputes¹

POLICY

Social Solutions is committed to continuous improvement and values the opportunity to improve guest services by receiving feedback from our customers and guests. Each guest or customer is free to provide any feedback, make complaint or raise any grievance they may have regarding our services or products and to have those grievances addressed promptly and fairly.

This policy is framed by natural justice principles and individuals' rights as they are specified in the Standards Australia Complaint Handling Standard As 4269-1995, the Disability Services Act (1993) and Standard 4 of the Disability Services Standards (2013).

This policy has been designed to provide guidance to both our customers and staff on the manner in which we receive and manage complaints. We are committed to being consistent, fair and impartial when handling your complaint.

PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to ensure:

- a. You are aware of Social Solution's complaint lodgement and handling process
- b. Both you and our staff understand our complaints handling process
- c. Your complaint is investigated impartially with a balanced view of all information and evidence
- d. We take reasonable steps to actively protect your personal information
- e. Your complaint is considered on its merits taking into account individual circumstances and needs.

DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

In this policy a complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer relating to a service delivery or guest service provided by us.

PROCEDURE

HOW A COMPLAINT CAN BE MADE

If you are dissatisfied with the 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

¹ An Easy Read guide to 'How to complain' is to be produced for the Welcome Pack for New Guests/Staff induction- Aug 21



uncomfortable with this or consider the relevant staff member is unable to address your concerns you can lodge a complaint with us in one of the following ways:

- By completing a feedback form on our website
<https://www.socialsolutionswa.com.au>
- By telephoning us :1800 290 996
- By writing to us:

By Mail: **Guest Services**
 Social Solutions
 PO Box 793
 CLOVERDALE WA 6985

By Email: info@socialsolutionswa.com.au

At our Website : <https://www.socialsolutionswa.com.au/contact-us/>

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

Our complaints handling process is free of charge.

THE INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED TO TELL US

When we are investigating your complaint we will be relying on information provided by you and information we may already be holding. We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary. To help 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 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
- Copies of any documentation which supports your complaint.

HELP WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT

The person receiving or managing your complaint will provide you with any assistance you may need to make your complaint. However if you consider you need further assistance



please inform us of this at the time you are lodging your complaint. You may exercise your right to use an independent advocate or other nominated representative to assist on your behalf.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

When taking a complaint, we will record your name and contact details. We will also record all details of your complaint including the facts and the cause/s of your complaint, the outcome and any actions taken following the investigation of your complaint. We will also record all dates and times relating to actions taken to resolve the complaint and communications between us.

As part of our on-going improvement plan, complaints will be monitored for any identifying trends by management and rectification/remedial action taken to mitigate any identified issues.

If you lodge a complaint we will record your personal information solely for the purposes of addressing your complaint. Your personal details will actively be protected from disclosure, in accordance with our Policy on Privacy unless you expressly consent to its disclosure.

Where a third party travel supplier such as a tour operator, was involved in your travel services, we may be required to speak with them to fully investigate your complaint.

FEEDBACK TO CUSTOMERS

We are committed to resolving your issues at the first point of contact, however, this will not be possible in all circumstances, in which case a more formal complaints process will be followed.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three (3) business days, and keep you informed of the progress of your complaint throughout our complaint resolution process.

We are committed to resolving your complaint within 10 business days of you lodging your complaint, however, this may not always be possible on every occasion. Where we have been unable to resolve your complaint within 10 business days, we will inform you of the reason for the delay and specify a date when we will be in a position to finalise your complaint.

During the investigation of your complaint we may need to seek further clarification or documentation from you to assist us in resolving your complaint.



If we have sought clarification or documentation from you and we are waiting on you to provide this information, we may not be able to meet our 10 business day finalisation commitment. In such circumstances upon receipt of your clarification or documentation we will indicate to you when we expect to finalise your complaint.

Once we have finalised your complaint, we will advise you of our findings and any action we have taken. We will do this in writing, unless it has been mutually agreed that we can provide it to you verbally.

You have the right to make enquiries about the current status of your complaint at any time by contacting us.

OUR SIX POINT COMPLAINT PROCESS

- **We acknowledge** – within three business days of receiving your complaint we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.
- **We review** – we undertake an initial review of your complaint and determine what if any additional information or documentation may be required to complete an investigation. We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.
- **We investigate** – within 10 business days of receiving your complaint we will investigate your complaint objectively and impartially, by considering the information you have provided us, our actions in relation to your dealings with us and any other information that could assist us in investigating your complaint.
- **We respond** – Following our investigation we will notify you of our findings and any actions we may have taken in regards to your complaint.
- **We take action** – where appropriate we amend our business practices or policies.
- **We record** - we will record your complaint for continuous improvement process and monitoring through regular review, your personal information will be recorded in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.

WHEN YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT ONE OF OUR EMPLOYEES

If you complain about a member of our staff, we will treat your complaint confidentially, impartially and equally (giving equal treatment to all people). We will investigate your



complaint thoroughly by finding out the relevant facts, speaking with the relevant people and verifying explanations where possible.

We will also treat our staff member objectively by:

- informing them of any complaint about their performance,
- providing them with an opportunity to explain the circumstances,
- providing them with appropriate support,
- Updating them on the complaint investigation and the result.

COMPLAINTS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY A REGULATOR OR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

If your complaint is currently being investigated by a relevant federal, state or territory consumer protection regulator or law enforcement agency we may cease to take further action in relation to your complaint pending finalisation of their investigation.

We will assist any agency with their investigations.

OUR COMPLAINT ESCALATION PROCESS

Where possible, we will attempt to resolve your complaint at the first point of contact. If we are unable to resolve your complaint at the first point of contact, we will undertake an investigation of your complaint and provide you with our findings.

If you are satisfied with our proposed decision or actions, we will close your complaint and record the findings for our continuous improvement program.

However, if you are not satisfied with our proposed decision or actions, we will record this, and provide you with information on how to escalate your complaint.

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW

You reserve the right to refer your complaint to your relevant federal, state or territory consumer protection agency at any time. Should you wish to speak to Consumer Protection in Western Australia:

- By completing an online complaints form on their website:
<http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection>
- By telephoning the Advice Line on **1300 30 40 54**
- By writing to them at: **Consumer Protection Division
Department of Commerce
Locked Bag 14**



Cloisters Square WA 6850

- By emailing them at consumer@commerce.wa.gov.au

NDIS COMMISSION COMPLAINTS²

If we are unable to resolve your concern or complaint, then you should seek further support. You may seek support from family, a friend or an independent advocate in making a complaint. For further information see:

Disability Advocacy - <https://www.pwdwa.org/> .

A complaint can be made to the NDIS Commission by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a complaint contact form.

The NDIS Commission can take complaints from anyone about:

- NDIS services or supports that were not provided in a safe and respectful way
- NDIS services and supports that were not delivered to an appropriate standard
- how an NDIS provider has managed a complaint about services or supports provided to an NDIS
- participant

As well as dealing with complaints, the NDIS Commission works to educate providers about delivering quality and safe supports, and effectively responding to complaints. If a complaint raises a serious compliance issue, the NDIS Commission has powers to take action.

STANDARDS

This policy will be measured by the number of complaints received in a 2 year period which is assumed to be zero.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Standards CORE 1- Rights and Responsibilities

² Inserted NDIS Complaints into policy template June 2020 - addition to Manual - August 21



Standards CORE 2 - Provider Governance and Operational Management

DH Code of Conduct

Customer Service Policy

Values Evidence

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative framework, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

Date Adopted: August 2013

Date Reviewed: July 2024³

Latest Date for Next Review: September 2025

³ Removed reference to ATAS Code of Conduct and complaints process - 0724