

# **NDIS Enquiries, Feedback and Complaints Policy**

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# 1. Context

## 1.1. Background

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) supports people with disability, their families, and carers to achieve their goals and outcomes. To do this, we need to listen to people with disability, and acknowledge and respond to what they are telling us.

We know we can always improve our services and that people may need to raise issues with us because something has not worked as well as it should. We are committed to improving the way we do things and see all feedback as an opportunity to improve.

People with disability have told us that some people are worried about raising issues with us in case it affects how we work with them in the future or impacts on their access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Feedback is a critical part of improving the services we provide. We want people to feel safe and supported to share their views and experiences with us. With this policy we aim to build trust with people and will take all necessary steps to make sure people are confident their issues will be handled appropriately. This document provides reassurance no detrimental actions will be taken against people, or their representatives, who raise issues or concerns with us.

## 1.2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- provide a feedback process that is easy to understand and follow.
- help address issues that are raised with us sooner and better.
- support people to feel safe to share their experiences with us.
- listen and respond to those who share their feedback to improve the way we deliver the NDIS.

All NDIA staff are responsible for managing enquiries, feedback, and complaints. This policy sets out how you can raise enquiries, feedback, or complaints with us and what you can expect from us when you do. The policy details how we will:

- listen to people with disability.
- acknowledge and respond to what people tell us.
- learn from peoples' experiences; good or bad.

## 1.3. Scope

This policy is for:

- people with disability who engage with the NDIS.
- participants and their support networks.

- NDIS service providers.
- disability sector representatives.
- NDIA and partner staff.

When we say 'us', 'we' or 'our staff', we mean:

- NDIA staff.
- [National Contact Centre staff](#).
- NDIA [Board members](#).
- NDIA contractors and organisations that do work for us.
- [local area coordinators](#).
- [early childhood partners](#).

Enquiries, feedback, and complaints can relate to any area of the NDIA or the performance of our staff. When we say 'enquiry', 'feedback' and 'complaint' we mean:

- **Enquiry** - requesting information, knowledge, or action.
- **Feedback** - sharing your experience, including observations, suggestions, opinions, or compliments.
- **Complaint** - expressing dissatisfaction about an experience with the NDIA that was displeasing or unacceptable and requires resolution or response.

Some issues and concerns are not covered by this policy, including:

- Complaints about NDIS providers. These are dealt with by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- Concerns raised internally by NDIA staff about unacceptable workplace behaviour. These are dealt with through NDIA internal policies and processes.
- Protected disclosures made in line with the public interest disclosure legislation.
- Where a person has a legal right to seek a [review of a decision](#).

Sometimes there are issues that are subject to specific processes. This includes:

- Allegations of fraud. These must be dealt with under the Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework.
- Serious allegations of staff misconduct. These must be dealt with under the **Public Service Act 1999**.

## 2. How to make an enquiry, give feedback or raise a complaint with us

### 2.1. Ways to contact the NDIA

We have a **no wrong door** approach for how people contact us. This means it does not matter how you raise your issue or concern with us. We will make sure that the

right people within the NDIA are aware of your enquiry, feedback or complaint and work to resolve it.

You can make an enquiry, provide feedback, or raise a complaint:

- In person by visiting a NDIS office or by raising concerns with a NDIS planner, Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or Early Childhood Partner (EC).
- Emailing [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au).
- By Mail to NDIA, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601.
- [Online Feedback Form](#).
- [Online live chat](#).
- Calling 1800 800 110 (National Contact Centre).
- Providers can lodge complaints and feedback from the provider portal 'View Complaints and Enquiries'.

## 2.2. Fraud and non-compliance

We are committed to preventing, detecting, and responding to fraud and non-compliance that results in the misuse of NDIS funds.

Our [Fraud Strategy Statement](#) outlines how we address fraud and non-compliance.

If you suspect someone is doing the wrong thing with NDIS funds, you should report it. You can report suspected fraud or non-compliance by:

- calling the NDIS Fraud Reporting and Scams Helpline on 1800 650 717
- emailing [fraudreporting@ndis.gov.au](mailto:fraudreporting@ndis.gov.au).

## 3. What to expect when you make an enquiry, give feedback, or make a complaint with us

### 3.1. Principles

We welcome all enquiries, feedback, and complaints. We want to:

- provide a high standard of service.
- listen to the people who we serve.
- be accountable when we make mistakes.

We see all issues raised as an opportunity to help us understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Our principles underpin how we approach all enquiries, feedback, and complaints. These principles: **transparent**; **responsive**; **respectful**; **empowerment**; and **connected**; reflect the **NDIS Participant Service Charter**. Our principles also align with the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 \(external\)](#) (NDIS Act).

Our enquiries, feedback and complaints handling principles are:

**Transparent:** We will make it simple and clear to raise an enquiry, feedback, or complaint. We do this with accessible and well-publicised channels.

- You can find information that is accessible, predictable, and easy to understand.
- You can easily find information on where and how to raise an enquiry, feedback, or complaint with us, who will help you, and what we will do with your issue.
- You can understand the reasons for our decisions and know your appeal rights.
- You can raise your issue through the channel or path that makes the most sense to you.

**Responsive:** We will consider your enquiries, feedback, and complaints quickly and seriously. We will let you know what to expect.

- You will receive a timely acknowledgement that you've contacted us.
- You will receive timely progress updates on your enquiry, feedback, or complaint. We'll let you know when you should expect your issue to be resolved.
- Your enquiry, feedback or complaint will be addressed quickly and seriously, by people who are able to help.

**Respectful:** We recognise your safety and rights when you raise an issue. Our staff are accountable and will respond to you with empathy and understanding.

- You have the right to raise an issue with us, and there is no detriment in doing so.
- You can raise your enquiry, feedback, or complaint in a safe, empathetic, and understanding environment. Staff will take the time to listen and support you.
- You will speak to someone who is trained and knowledgeable. They will be able to help you resolve your enquiry, feedback or complaint or will connect you to someone who can.

**Empowerment:** We encourage and enable people with disability to raise issues with us directly. We value your experience by learning from it to improve how we do things.

- You receive the information you need from us, so you are prepared and supported to make decisions.
- You feel encouraged, safe, and confident to raise issues directly to us, or through your representatives.
- Your experience and the issues you raise are valued. We will use them to improve how we do things, including addressing the root causes that led to issues being raised.

**Connected:** We will support you to access, engage with and navigate our processes. We will support you to get as close to your desired outcome as possible while adhering to NDIS legislation and guidelines.

- You will be a part of the resolution process. We will work with you to get as close to your desired outcome as possible.
- You will be helped to access supports and services to progress your issue and navigate our processes. We will help you with other options if you wish.
- You will be aware of all the government and community services and supports you can access.

This policy considers the [Commonwealth Ombudsman: Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide \(external\)](#) principles including **fairness, accessibility, efficiency, integration** and **first contact resolution**.

### 3.2. Timeframes

The [Participant Service Charter](#) provides clear service standards and timeframes. After you contact us, we aim to:

- **Acknowledge** all contact within **1 day** of receipt.
- **Contact** you within **2 days** of acknowledgement.
- **Resolve** 90% of NDIA managed responses within **21 days** of receipt. (We aim to resolve issues and concerns more quickly where possible, but some complex issues may take longer than 21 days to address).

We will respond and communicate about enquiries, feedback, and complaints by:

- **Taking immediate action** if there is a high or extreme risk identified to the person or their situation.
- **Keeping you informed** about the progress of your enquiry or complaint at every stage.
- **Publishing regular information** on our performance against the Participant Service Guarantee through the NDIS Quarterly Report.

### 3.3. Steps to manage your enquiries, feedback and complaints

All our staff have a role in actively supporting the people they serve to be heard. Our staff ensure that any issues raised are understood, acknowledged, and appropriately resolved wherever possible.

The steps involved in managing enquiries, feedback and complaints are outlined below.

#### Step 1 - Acknowledge

We will tell you within 1 business day that we have received your enquiry, feedback, or complaint.



## **Step 2 - Assess and record**

When we receive your enquiry, feedback, or complaint, we need to:

- work out how we can answer your enquiry or resolve your feedback or complaint.
- record it in our business system.

To do this we will consider:

- the resolution that you are seeking.
- individual risk including participant safety risks.
- who we need to work with to help resolve the issue for you.
- any accessibility requirements and your preferred communication method.
- the sensitivity of the matter, including privacy considerations.

## **Step 3 - Contact**

We will contact you within 2 business days to let you know how we are managing your enquiry, feedback, or complaint. People may be contacted by phone or email.

We might ask you for more information to help us better understand the issue and your desired resolution.

## **Step 4 - Resolve or refer**

The first staff member who you communicate with will try to help you with your enquiry, feedback, or complaint.

If we need more time to address your enquiry, feedback, or complaint we will advise you what we need to do. We will also let you know who will contact you next, if the person needs to be different to the first staff member who helped you.

We try to help you with most issues the first time you tell us about them. If we can't do this, we will connect you to the part of the NDIA or another consumer body or government authority who can.

## **Step 5 - Communicate**

We will make sure we contact you:

- each time we have an update.
- until we find an answer to your enquiry
- until we resolve your feedback or complaint as close to your desired outcome as possible.

## **Step 6 - Respond**

We will contact you when we finish managing your enquiry, feedback, or complaint.

If we need to, we will provide you with more information, explain our decision or provide a remedy where appropriate.

## **Step 7 - Follow-up**

We can tell you who to contact if you are not happy with:

- our decision.
- how we managed your enquiry, feedback, or complaint.

This might include the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

## **Step 8 - Consider and learn**

After we finish managing your enquiry, feedback, or complaint, we will check to see if there are any:

- systemic issues we need to address.
- improvements for us to consider.

# **4. Complaint classifications**

It is important for us to classify complaints to help us:

- connect you to the right area to help you with the issue.
- deliver a timely and suitable response.
- use information to improve our performance and service.

Complaints may move between classifications if:

- a person's situation changes.
- more information emerges during the investigation and resolution process.

## **4.1. Classification levels**

### **Level 1 – issues that can be resolved at first point of contact**

These issues or concerns can be resolved by the staff member who first helps you.

They can be resolved by:

- providing you with information or an explanation.
- acknowledging your concern or apologising.

They are managed by all NDIA staff. This includes the National Contact Centre and service delivery team members.

### **Level 2 – issues that need investigation**

These issues or concerns need investigation and/or coordination to resolve.

They can be resolved by:

- providing you with additional information about a decision, process, or procedure.
- correcting an error.
- providing feedback to our staff about conduct or errors in processes.

They may require input from more than one NDIA area to resolve.

A dedicated complaints resolution team may support issues that need further actions for a resolution and may refer to the appropriate business area for management and support.

They are generally managed by the business area where the issue first arose.

### **Level 3 – issues that are complex or require formal resolution**

These issues are complex or may need formal resolution. This may include issues or concerns that:

- relate to Administrative Appeals Tribunal matters.
- need external involvement (other consumer bodies or government or state authorities).

These issues may need more detailed or formal investigation. These are generally managed by the dedicated complaints resolution team within the NDIA.

## **4.2. Risk assessments**

We assess the risk for all enquiries, feedback and complaints when received. The risk assessment helps prioritise how we need to respond to the issues raised.

The [Participant Safeguarding Policy](#) outlines how we identify, assess, and respond to risk.

We recognise that some participants may have unique risk factors that indicate a need for more support from us if they raise an issue.

Our staff will be supported by targeted training, operational guidance, protocols, and resources to ensure they:

- understand their obligation to apply the principles and approaches in the Participant Safeguarding Policy.
- identify, assess, and manage risks in a structured, person-centred, and consistent manner.
- take actions that are respectful of, and considered within, the context of the person's cultural heritage and beliefs with a focus on cultural safety.
- seek guidance and advice from managers or specialist teams when required.

## 5. Referrals to other organisations

Sometimes we can't resolve an enquiry, feedback, or complaint. This may happen when:

- the issue is not within the scope of the NDIS.
- a satisfactory resolution can't be reached after multiple contacts.

In these instances, we will tell you about other organisations who may be able to help you.

### 5.1. Complaints about service providers

NDIS providers are independent organisations. We can't manage enquiries, feedback, or complaints about independent organisations.

A complaint received by the NDIA about a NDIS provider will be recorded in our business system and the person will be advised to follow the provider's complaint handling processes in the first instance. If this has already been done, the person will be assisted to contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission). The NDIS Commission is responsible for regulating the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services delivered by NDIS providers.

The NDIA has a complaints protocol with the NDIS Commission. We sometimes transfer complaints or collaborate on investigations and resolution. This may happen when:

- complaints are made about a provider.
- if the issue affects the supports available to a NDIS participant.

### 5.2. Serious incidents referring abuse, neglect or exploitation

The NDIA is responsible for referring serious incidents that are raised as part of an enquiry, feedback, or complaint immediately to the appropriate body. This might be the NDIS Commission (if the incident occurs while a NDIS support or service is being delivered), another state or territory regulator, or law enforcement.

All staff are obligated to report concerns about abuse, neglect, and exploitation to appropriate authorities where these are observed, suspected, or reported through interactions with participants and NDIS providers. At times this may involve staff contacting emergency services on "000" when appropriate.

### 5.3. Issues outside of the NDIA's control

Some enquiries, feedback and complaints are required to be referred to other consumer bodies or government or state authorities to investigate. For example, a complaint about another government agency.

## 5.4. External review of how we managed an enquiry, feedback or complaint

If you are not happy with how we managed your enquiry, feedback, or complaint you may seek assistance from the Commonwealth Ombudsman by:

- calling the office of the Ombudsman on 1300 362 072; or
- visiting the [ombudsman](#) website.

## 5.5. External review of our decision

If you don't agree with a decision we have made, please contact us. We can explain the decision and our reasons. You may also ask for an internal review of the decision. We call decisions the NDIA can review 'reviewable decisions.'

If you still don't agree with our decision after the internal review, you can ask the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to review our decision. We call this an 'external review.'

Our Guideline, '[Reviewing our Decisions](#)' has information on what decisions we can review, how you can ask for a review of a decision, and what happens during the review.

# 6. Continuous improvement

Your enquiries, feedback and complaints present an opportunity to support continuous improvement. This is a process that finds and acts on opportunities to improve. This ongoing cycle enhances business practices and processes.

Consistent work practices and records management improve how we report and respond to the issues raised with the NDIA. This enhances our ability to identify systemic, policy or process issues.

Regular analysis of the issues raised helps us develop training material to support our staff to improve our services.

# 7. Appendix

## 7.1. Personal information requirements

Our staff must ensure the privacy of all personal information included in any issues and concerns raised with us. All records with personal information are protected from:

- unauthorised access
- misuse
- interference

- loss
- disclosure

All enquiries, feedback and complaints are managed in line with the [NDIA's Privacy Policy](#).

## 7.2. Authorised representatives

Only authorised representatives can request information or act on a participant's behalf. This includes:

- participants
- plan nominees
- child representatives
- court-appointed decision makers
- other third parties with express consent

## 7.3. Consent requirements

Where a person raises an enquiry, feedback, or complaint on behalf of someone else, our staff must make sure that they have consent to:

- act on behalf of the person affected by the issue.
- receive information about the person in relation to the issue raised.

Some enquiries, feedback and complaints can be progressed without consent. This will limit the information that can be provided to the person raising the issue.

## 7.4. Anonymous feedback

We provide a safe environment for people to raise enquiries, feedback, and complaints. We acknowledge that sometimes people prefer to remain anonymous. We respect people's right to provide anonymous feedback and complaints.

For some issues we do need to identify the person raising the issue to investigate or respond in full.

## 7.5. Model litigant obligations

When the NDIA is a litigation party, we always act as a model litigant. This includes when people ask the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to review a NDIA decision they do not agree with.

We will investigate any concerns or breaches of our [model litigant guidelines](#).