

Complaints Policy for Caregivers

POLICY STATEMENT

Pregnancy to Parenthood (P2P) is committed to building a culture that encourages open communication, feedback and complaints; and is committed to ongoing service improvement and learning from complaints. P2P client families have the right to make a complaint and have their complaint addressed. An external party may act on behalf of the caregiver.

1. Purpose

This Policy outlines P2P's process in receiving feedback and resolving complaints raised by Caregivers in a fair, sensitive, effective and timely manner.

It aims to:

- put in place an open and transparent complaint handling system,
- specify the key performance indicators to which we will hold ourselves accountable,
- establish timeframes for resolving complaints,
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of organisation staff,
- ensure staff handle complaints fairly and objectively,
- set out how staff record and analyse complaint data to identify where we can improve our services.

2. Delegation and Scope

The Executive Director is the delegated authority responsible for administering this policy. This policy applies to all P2P team members and student trainees.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by a Caregiver with the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by an organisation or its contractor, or a delay or failure in providing a service, taking an action, or making a decision by an organisation or its contractor.
Feedback	Is any information customers give a company about their experience, and includes insights, opinions, reactions, preferences, and complaints about a company's products or services. Examples of customer feedback include: Customer service feedback, Surveys, Reviews.
Caregiver	A caregiver refers to any individual who is responsible for the care and well-being of a child or dependent person. This includes parents, legal guardians, foster carers, extended family members (such as grandparents), or any other person acting in a caregiving

	role, either temporarily or permanently. Caregivers may be biological, adoptive, or in other informal caregiving relationships, and are recognized as key decision-makers and advocates in matters concerning the care and support of the person under their care.
--	--

4. Principles

- P2P is committed to resolving complaints within a culture that recognises an individual's right to complain. We value complaints and recognise them as being part of our business of serving our communities and improving service delivery.
- People with a range of needs can easily complain and staff actively assist them to navigate the complaints process.
- P2P makes it clear how to complain, where to complain and how the complaint will be handled. The steps taken to respond to a complaint are recorded and will stand up to scrutiny.
- Complaints are dealt with courteously, impartially, within established timeframes and are assessed on merit.
- Complaint information is handled according to privacy laws and other relevant legislation. We provide clear information about how we handle personal information. Complaint data is de-identified if reported on more widely.
- We are accountable internally and externally for our decision making and complaint handling performance. We provide explanations and reasons for decisions and ensure that our decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.
- Acting on, learning from and using complaint data helps us identify problems and improve services.

5. Procedure

5.1 Who Can Make a Complaint

Complaints may be made by:

- Individuals or families directly receiving services.
- A caregiver or family member acting on behalf of the person receiving services.
- A **referrer** or **external party** (such as a health professional, social worker, or community service provider) acting on behalf of the family or person receiving services, with their consent.

In cases where a referrer or external party submits a complaint, written consent from the family or individual must be provided (where appropriate and possible), ensuring that they have authorized the referrer to act on their behalf. If consent cannot be obtained, complaints may still be reviewed if there are concerns about the well-being or care of the person receiving services.

5.2 How to make a complaint

A person can make a complaint in a number of ways.

Mail: Community Clinical School Joondalup Health Campus, Cnr Grand Blvd & Shenton Ave, Joondalup, WA 6027 (addressed to Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic)

Telephone: +61 0477 829 593

Email: info@p2pclinic.com.au

In- Person by booking an appointment either by emailing or telephoning through a request for an appointment.

5.3 Response to Complaints

Early Resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with P2P. This may include holding an informal discussion, a verbal investigation, and documenting only the outcome. When appropriate, P2P may offer an explanation or apology to the person raising the complaint.

Formalising a complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the early resolution stage, the following will apply:

- a) Request that the complaint be provided in writing, including requesting information on what avenues have been explored to resolve the matter, what action they are requesting, what expectations they have for the outcome of the complaint and any additional support required.
- b) Acknowledge the complaint within 10 working days; assess and prioritise the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised.
- c) Respond immediately if a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security and escalate matter appropriately.
- d) Provide information to the caregiver about the process by informing them as soon as possible of the following:
 - the complaints process;
 - the expected time frames for the steps in the process;
 - the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay;
 - the complainant's likely involvement in the process; and
 - the possible outcome of their complaint.
- e) Advise the caregiver as soon as possible when unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).
- f) Advise the caregiver as soon as possible when P2P is unable to meet the time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for the delay.

5.4 Management of Complaint

Formal complaints will be managed by a member of the P2P management team who will work in consultation with any other relevant staff members.

P2P will ensure that the person handling the complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

P2P will apply the following steps when managing the complaint;

Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, P2P will record the complaint and any supporting information. A unique identifier/number will be assigned to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received;

- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they are requesting;
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the complainant requires.

Acknowledge

P2P will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, within 10 working days, and the complainant's intention, if applicable, to have a support person accompany them throughout the complaints process.

When appropriate, an explanation or apology may be offered. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making the complaint.

Assess and Investigate

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, P2P will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within its control. The outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint will be considered and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, there will be consideration of:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is;
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about health and safety;
- How the person making the complaint is being affected;
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

As a general rule, complaints will be handled and resolved as quickly as possible and ideally within eight weeks. Complaints of greater complexity may take longer to resolve. Regular updates will be provided during the investigation process if it is outside these timelines.

After assessing the complaint, and deciding on the appropriate process for its management, P2P may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation;
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, including perusing any questions and speaking to other relevant parties;
- Determine if the issues raised fall within P2P's jurisdiction;
- Seek and evaluate any relevant documents and information and consider mitigating factors;
- Interview parties relevant to the complaint;
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint;
- Take into account the wishes of the respondent in determining an appropriate resolution in cases where allegations have not been substantial; and
- Initiate appropriate staff and trainee disciplinary action, when applicable

5.5 Determine Outcome and Provide Reasons for Decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the person making the complaint will be contacted and advised of:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action taken;
- The reason/s for the decision;

- The remedy or resolution/s being proposed or put in place, and in cases where allegations cannot be proven or disproven, take action that may require both the complainant and respondent to agree to mutual outcomes;
- The outcome, using the most appropriate medium. The actions taken will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements; and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, or the complaint taken to P2P Board or an external agency.

Appropriate outcomes may include:

- a. A requirement that the complainant receives an apology and/or the issue complained of is addressed or the behaviour modified;
- b. A requirement that the respondent undertake training or development;
- c. Measures to address any potential stakeholder repercussions;
- d. Seeking resolution through mediation by an agreed, trained professional if the complainant agrees; (Approval must be provided by the Board before engaging an external mediator or consultant).
- e. Counselling, with a trained counsellor, including external counsellors, for complainant and/or respondent;
- f. Establishing a monitoring period to assess progress of the strategies undertaken; or
- g. Disciplinary actions, in which case the matter would be referred to the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

If the allegations are not substantiated, the wishes of the respondent may be taken into account in determining an appropriate resolution. Appropriate outcomes might include:

- a. The complainant is provided with feedback to gain a better understanding of the situation so that his/her concerns are addressed; and
- b. Measures to restore the relationship such as facilitation or mediation by an agreed, trained professional.

If the allegations cannot be proven or disproven, appropriate outcomes may include:

- a. Advice to both parties that no further action is required;
- b. Training and development or alternative services as relevant for either party;
- c. Measures to restore the relationship such as facilitation or mediation by an agreed, trained professional;
- d. Negotiation of “behaviour agreements” setting out how the parties will or will not behave towards each other in future, and what will happen if this does not occur; and
- e. Establishing a monitoring period to assess progress if strategies are to be undertaken.