



Postgraduate Medical Council
of Western Australia

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICY

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

SCOPE

This policy applies to the management of all feedback/complaints received from PMCWA stakeholders, and is to be read in conjunction with the relevant WA Health policies, guidelines and related operational directives.

POLICY STATEMENT

PMCWA strives to identify any aspect of service delivery which requires change in order to effect improvement where possible. Stakeholder feedback is a valuable component of quality improvement, and the effective management of complaints is also an important part of building effective partnerships with stakeholders. This policy details the PMCWA complaints management process and advocates an efficient, proactive approach to complaint and feedback management that results in the best possible outcomes.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by or on behalf of an individual consumer/carer regarding any aspect of a service provided by a health service. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing.
Formal complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by, or on behalf of, an individual consumer/carer regarding any aspect of a service provided by a health service. A formal complaint can be lodged in writing or verbally.
Informal complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction by, or on behalf of, an individual regarding any aspect of a service provided. Informal complaints are often straightforward matters that can be resolved at point of contact.
Concern	An enquiry or feedback for an individual regarding any aspect of services where the issue is minor and can be resolved immediately without going through the formal complaint process (e.g. the complainant is satisfied by immediate actions to resolve the issue). Immediate resolution negates the need for any follow up actions (i.e. if further action is required to resolve the complaint, it is not a concern unless the complainant does not wish to lodge a formal complaint).

PRINCIPLES

1. Stakeholder feedback is used in a constructive manner, to initiate the implementation practice improvements, including practices relating to the management of complaints.
2. PMCWA encourages all stakeholders to provide feedback, concerns and complaints, to be actioned in an open, receptive and transparent manner.
3. Each complaint is addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner, and treated as legitimate and investigated without prejudice.
4. PMCWA Secretariat staff are empowered to resolve minor grievances if within their capacity to do so; formal complaint processes are made available to stakeholders if they are not satisfied with the outcome or the complaint is not immediately resolvable.

5. Complaints are monitored and escalated as appropriate if:
 - A resolution is not possible at the first contact
 - The complaint is in writing
 - There is media, political or legal potential
6. Complaints are acknowledged and addressed in a timely manner; with complainants kept informed throughout the process. This includes:
 - Acknowledging written complaints within 5 working days of receipt.
 - Informing the complainant of the approximate time that will be taken to resolve the complaint.
 - Commencing investigations within 5 working days of receipt.
 - Sending a final response within 30 working days of receipt or as soon as practicable, in the best interest of all parties.
 - Advising complainants of any delays and providing updates on the progress of the investigation at 15 working day intervals
7. Senior management (e.g. PMCWA Manager, PMCWA Chair) is responsible for drafting written responses to complaints with media, political or legal potential. Legal advice is obtained as required.
8. The relevant facts and decisions are communicated openly and all personal details are kept confidential throughout the complaint management process.
9. Non-formal complaints are monitored for emerging trends that indicate improvement is required.
10. Verbal conversations can be terminated at the discretion of the staff member handling a complaint after warning of that intention. In such cases the complainant will be advised to limit all future dealings to written correspondence, and that PMCWA will only respond to future correspondence that details new information that is significant and that warrants further action.
11. All complaints and feedback communication are retained, stored appropriately and are not released without prior written permission to anyone not involved in the complaint process.
12. It is recognised that positive feedback provides an opportunity for PMCWA to support particular initiatives that may have perceived negative aspects. As such PMCWA follows appropriate processes to record and report compliments and other forms of stakeholder feedback.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council, PMCWA is responsible for:

- Ensuring Council level commitment and participation in the complaints/feedback management process.
- Supporting and facilitating a culture of accountability that includes accepting appropriate responsibility for quality improvements.

The Executive Committee, PMCWA is responsible for:

- Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to complaints/feedback management process.
- Supporting and facilitating a culture of accountability that includes accepting appropriate responsibility for quality improvements.

The PMCWA Manager is responsible for:

- Supporting and facilitating a culture of accountability that includes accepting appropriate responsibility for quality improvements and specifically, receipt of complaints and feedback.
- Ensuring that complaints are dealt with politely, tactfully, impartially, confidentially and that appropriate actions in response to the feedback/complaint are undertaken.
- Escalating complaint issues to the relevant authority where appropriate.

PMCWA Secretariat staff are responsible for:

- Receiving both verbal and written complaints and are required to follow the complaints process in order to have concerns regarding services heard and managed in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that complaints are dealt with politely, tactfully, impartially, confidentially and that appropriate actions in response to the feedback/complaint are undertaken.
- Escalating complaint issues to the relevant authority where appropriate.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

WA Department of Health. (2013). Operational Directive OD 0455/13: [WA Health Complaints Management Policy](#), 18 September 2013.

WA Department of Health. (2013). [WA Health Complaints Management Policy](#). Patient Safety Surveillance Unit, WA Department of Health.

VERSION CONTROL

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