

SVC-002 Compliments, Complaints, and Feedback Policy

Authorised by: Board
Applies to: PWDA Board, employees, volunteers
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Policy Owner: Chief Executive Officer

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Purpose

To set out PWDA's commitment to providing quality services, and the place of compliments, complaints and feedback in continually improving our services and how we work.

To explain how people can give compliments and feedback to PWDA.

To explain how people can make a complaint and how we manage complaints.

To outline the roles, rights and responsibilities of everyone involved in a complaints process.

To guide how People with Disability Australia LTD (PWDA) responds to and manages complaints, compliments and feedback.

Scope

This policy applies to:

Complaints, compliments and feedback received from PWDA service users, PWDA members, other stakeholders and the public about any aspect of our services, operations and governance. This includes complaints from members about the Board.

It does not apply to:

Staff grievances (including contractors and volunteers). The Staff Grievance Policy covers these kinds of grievances.

Disputes between members.

Policy statement

PWDA exists to uphold the rights of people with disabilities through individual and systemic advocacy.

PWDA is committed to providing the best services and supports possible. We support the right of people to tell us if they are not happy with any aspect of our work.

PWDA welcomes and values complaints, compliments, and feedback. We use them to help us understand what we are doing well, what we could do better and what we must do to improve how we work.

Feedback also helps us to understand, communicate with and give better support to the people who use our services. This helps PWDA with planning for services and programs, and improving the quality of service we offer our members, clients and the wider public.

Feedback, including compliments, helps PWDA staff to develop skills and increases their work satisfaction.

PWDA treats people who give any kind of feedback with respect. We also expect people giving us feedback to respect PWDA staff.

We encourage people to give feedback and tell them about the different ways they can provide feedback and how we will actively support them to do so.

PWDA makes sure people using our services know they have the right to complain without fear of negative consequences, such as losing a service.

PWDA aims to fix problems before they become bigger problems.

PWDA staff receive training on how to manage complaints, compliments and feedback.

We handle all complaints and feedback in a fair, non-judgemental way, following the PWDA complaints procedure and aiming for the best outcome possible.

PWDA is committed to handling and resolving complaints in ways that recognise and are appropriately adjusted to the access needs and barriers of both complainants and respondents. If a complainant or respondent's access needs or barriers are directly relevant to the complaint, then PWDA will make it a priority to find a solution which is inclusive.

We respond to all feedback promptly and work together with the person, keeping in contact about what we are doing.

If PWDA receives any feedback or complaints that include or suggest serious or criminal misconduct or high-risk situations, we act immediately following the relevant PWDA procedures and any relevant external requirements. This includes claims or suspicion of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

PWDA treats all feedback and complaints confidentially.

If we cannot resolve a complaint to your satisfaction, we will tell you about other options including external organisations that deal with complaints.

We record all feedback. We use it to track trends, help with staff development, fix problems, and make changes and improvements to our services and how PWDA operates. This information becomes part of PWDA's Continuous Improvement Plan.

The CEO reports to the Board on complaints, compliments and feedback, any trends, significant actions taken, and any related big and/or strategic issues the Board needs to know about or discuss.

PWDA is accredited under the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a self-regulated industry code of good practice. It aims to improve the outcomes of international development and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing the transparency and accountability for signatory organisations. For complaints regarding an alleged breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct, complaints can be made to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee after raising the matter with PWDA.

PWDA reviews the compliments, complaints and feedback procedures regularly to make sure they are working well. This includes outcomes and whether people are satisfied with the process and outcomes.

Guiding principles

PWDA Purpose: To be a leading disability rights, advocacy and representative organisation of and for all people with disability, which strives for the realisation of our vision of a socially just, accessible and inclusive community.

PWDA Guiding principles: as set out in our Strategic Directions.

Respect: PWDA supports the right of everyone involved in a complaints process to be treated with respect.

Inclusive practice: PWDA is committed to inclusive handling of complaints and to finding inclusive solutions that recognise the access needs and barriers of both complainants and respondents.

Accessibility: the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback policy is available in the formats people need. There is Plain English and Easy Read information on how to give feedback on our website and in the Welcome Pack we give to new service users.

Quality management: PWDA is guided by the National Disability Services Standards including service management & the right of service users to make complaints.

Good practice in managing complaints: ISO 10002:2018. Quality Management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations: Commonwealth Ombudsman: Better practice complaint handling guide

Continuous improvement: We use complaints, compliments, and feedback to continuously review and upgrade our policies, procedures, and programs

Risk management: We assess all complaints for risk while they are active, to ensure: the safety and wellbeing of the person making the complaint and the community, and that PWDA is complying with all legislative requirements.

Definitions

Feedback

This is any information we receive about PWDA, staff (including contractors and volunteers), our services and the way we operate. Feedback includes opinions, comments, suggestions, compliments, complaints and expressions of concern. People can give feedback in a range of different ways including in person, by email or through comments on social media.

When someone gives us direct feedback, they can decide whether it is a complaint, compliment or suggestion for improvement, tell us what they would like us to do, and say if they would like a formal response.

PWDA will reply to anyone who provides us with feedback. We will let them know we have received it, and thank them for their opinion.

Compliments

A compliment is a message about something that PWDA has done well including satisfaction with a specific service or employee, or more generally about the work we do.

Complaint

A complaint is when someone says they are not satisfied with the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by PWDA. It could be about behaviours and attitudes of staff, Board, or volunteers, including a breach of the PWDA Code of Conduct and Ethics. Or criticism of a PWDA campaign, public event, or activity, or disagreement with content on the PWDA website, in our social media, or written publications. It can also be about the handling of a previous complaint. PWDA will respond to all complaints.

Complaints can be informal or formal:

Informal – this is a complaint that can be successfully resolved informally between the person and the staff involved at the point of service.

Formal – this includes:

When a complaint could not be successfully resolved informally or when a 'formal process' is the preferred option.

When an issue is submitted through a formal complaint and feedback process.

When the issue suggests there could be serious implications such as a critical incident, abuse, bullying, incidents involving children or other serious misconduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone involved in giving, responding to or managing feedback has a responsibility to be respectful of each other, and respectful regarding what the feedback is about.

Complainants are responsible for giving PWDA the information we need and being available and willing to help us resolve their complaint fairly and promptly. If a complainant acts in an unreasonable way, PWDA may choose to follow the Unreasonable Complainant procedure in this document.

Respondents are responsible for cooperating with the process and being honest about the situation that led to the complaint, so we can resolve complaints fairly and promptly.

All staff understand their responsibility regarding complaints, including taking feedback and complaints, forwarding details to the Governance and Compliance Coordinator, and helping as appropriate during a complaints process.

Governance and Compliance Coordinator is responsible for receiving and recording feedback and complaints, confirming details and expectations with the complainant and any support they need, allocating complaints to a CRO, and following up and recording outcomes of the complaint.

Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO) is appointed by the Governance and Compliance Coordinator or the Board. It is usually the staff member's direct manager. They are responsible for the handling and finalisation of a complaint and reporting on the outcomes.

CEO is responsible for supporting the CRO and reviewing the outcomes. The CEO only becomes involved in complaints that are escalated to them, or if someone is unhappy with the CRO's decision and outcome of their complaint.

The CEO reports to the Board on feedback and complaints outcomes, trends, actions taken to improve services and operations, and makes strategic recommendations.

PWDA Board is responsible, depending on the situation, for supporting the CRO and reviewing the outcomes. They discuss CEO reports and any strategic recommendations. The Board also handles any complaints from members about the Board.

Procedures

Where can people find our Complaints, Compliments and Feedback policy?

The PWDA website has a page about making a complaint. It includes a brochure that explains our policy and how to give feedback or make a complaint. There is also a page with an Easy Read version and a link to the main policy.

This brochure is also in the Welcome Pack for new clients of PWDA's Individual Advocacy Service. When Individual Advocates meet new clients for the first time, they explain about making a complaint.

The brochure is available in key community languages and includes information about translation and interpreter services. These services can help people from non-English speaking backgrounds to communicate with PWDA, including if they want to make a complaint.

How can people give feedback to PWDA?

Anyone who wants to make a complaint, give a compliment, or provide feedback can do so:

1. In writing, to PWDA, PO Box 666, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.
2. By email, to pwd@pwd.org.au
3. By phone, to 1800 422 015

How can people give feedback to ACFID

Anyone who wants to make a complaint regarding breaches of the ACFID Code of Conduct can make a complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. Complaints must first be raised with PWDA as outlined above. Once raised with PWDA, a complaint can be raised with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee in the following ways:

4. In writing, to Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee, c/- ACFID, Private Bag 3, Deakin ACT 2600
5. By email, to Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee, Code@acfid.asn.au

Compliments and feedback

The Senior Administrator will log compliments and non-complaint feedback from people with disability and other stakeholders in the Feedback Register.

Within three (3) business days, they will:

- Reply, in writing, to compliments or feedback.
- Write to staff who the compliments are about.

The Senior Administrator will record these in the Feedback Register.

PWDA will use feedback, such as suggestions on how we can improve our services, when we review our programs, policies, and procedures.

Complaints

PWDA has a “no wrong door” approach to people who want to make a complaint - they can choose how they make a complaint. Any staff member at PWDA can take a complaint.

We encourage people who are unhappy with a service to start by talking to the staff member directly involved. Often, this is the best and quickest way to sort out the problem

If they feel uncomfortable doing this, or the issue is more serious, they can speak to that person’s manager or another staff member, or contact PWDA by mail, email or phone.

People can also make complaints in person to the Senior Administrator at our Sydney Head Office, Level 8, 418a Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. They should call 1800 422 015, to arrange a suitable day/time for an appointment.

When a staff member receives a complaint by phone or face-to-face, they will tell the person that PWDA will follow the PWDA Privacy Policy. We will keep their information confidential. We will only share it with people who need to be involved to help resolve the complaint.

The staff member will use the PWDA Complaint form (Attachment A) to record the details of the complaint, including:

- The name of the person making the complaint (complainant).
- The date, time, and location the complaint was made to the staff member.
- What the complaint is about.
- What the complainant thinks PWDA should do to fix the problem.
- If the complainant needs any support to progress the complaint.
- If the staff member believes a senior Manager/Director needs to deal with the complaint.
- If the complainant asks for their identity to be kept confidential.

Staff members will email the above information, or any complaint they receive by email, through reception to our PWDA email address within one (1) business day where it is captured and logged by our Governance and Compliance Coordinator.

The Senior Administrator within one (1) business day will then refer the complaint to the appropriate person (or their manager or CEO).

Tables at the end of this policy provide step-by-step guidance for staff and Board on how to handle complaints and reviews of complaints.

Registering complaints

The Governance and Compliance Coordinator records all complaints in the Complaints Register. They also track that complaints have been responded to and only close a complaint off in the register when they have received a draft of the reply or outcome.

The Complaints Register helps us to:

- Ensure PWDA deals with complaints effectively and efficiently in the least time possible.
- Monitor trends if there is a number of similar issues being raised in complaints.
- Help PWDA to keep improving how we handle complaints and help us improve our services and the way we work.

Who is responsible for handling complaints?

The Governance and Compliance Coordinator will appoint a Complaints Resolution Officer (CRO) to handle the complaint. This is usually the direct senior manager of the relevant team or department. If the matter involves the CEO, the Governance and Compliance Coordinator will refer the complaint to the Board, who will appoint a CRO. In either of these situations, the CRO will be appointed within three (3) business days. If the complaint is about the Board, this is referred to the CEO who will forward to the Board for review and action

Who can be a CRO?

The CRO must:

- Have a good understanding of the PWDA Compliments, Complaints and Feedback policy and procedures,
- Be competent in investigating and dealing with complaints and resolving disputes, and
- Not have any conflict of interest regarding any of the people involved or the issue the complaint is about.

Acknowledging a complaint

The Governance and Compliance Coordinator then forwards the complaint to the relevant manager who becomes the Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO) to handle that complaint. They review and contact the complainant within three (3) business days to say PWDA has received their complaint. They check that the person's details are correct, including any support needs and how they prefer to be contacted. The CRO also checks that the details of the complaint are correct.

The CRO explains informal and formal complaints options; whether the complainant thinks

the problem could be fixed informally or if they want to lodge a formal complaint. They tell the complainant that informal complaints are still recorded, that PWDA can support the person to sort out the problem, and it is usually the quickest and easiest way to deal with less serious complaints. PWDA respects people's choices on how they would like their complaint to be handled. They explain the next steps in the process and how long the process will take.

How does PWDA handle complaints in an inclusive way?

PWDA understands that both complainants and respondents may have access needs and experience barriers. We handle complaints in ways that recognise this, arranging supports and making any reasonable adjustments that are needed.

The CRO asks all complainants and respondents if and how their access needs and disability may be relevant to the complaint. This includes what the complaint is about and the complaints handling process.

If a complainant or respondent's access needs or barriers are directly relevant to the complaint, then PWDA will make it a priority to find a solution which is inclusive.

If either or both the complainant or respondent say the complaint relates to access issues, the CRO will ask if they want to propose some reasonable adjustments to solve the problem. The CRO can use the Reasonable Adjustments Policy to assess requests.

The CRO will arrange any supports or adjustments either person needs while the complaint is being handled. For example:

- Information in the person's preferred format.
- Translation and interpreter (including sign interpreter) services.
- Access to independent (non-PWDA) individual advocacy support.
- Other reasonable adjustments they may need.

People have the right to have their own advocate and/or supporter with them while the complaint is being handled.

Anonymous complaints

If someone wants to make a complaint but remain anonymous (not give their name), they should be told that this will make it harder to investigate their complaint, and it may mean the complaint may be unable to be handled formally. It will be difficult to get accurate information from the person or people the complaint is about if they don't know who made the complaint. Also, details about the complaint could identify the complainant.

However, PWDA will still record and investigate the complaint. We will do what is possible and necessary, especially where the complaint raises serious concerns about the conduct or alleged criminal activity of a of a staff member, Board member or volunteer.

Unreasonable behaviour by complainants

Sometimes, there could be situations where a person acts unreasonably when they want their complaint to be addressed. Unreasonable behaviour includes being aggressive, using abusive language, arguing, being unreasonably persistent, making inappropriate contact and being uncooperative.

If a staff member taking a complaint believes that a complainant is behaving unreasonably, they should tell them that they are going to refer the matter to their manager. They must immediately tell their manager and the Governance and Compliance Coordinator who will review the situation. They will decide how to manage it fairly, ethically, reasonably and safely, including explaining to the person that their behaviour is not acceptable and why. If the person keeps behaving unreasonably, the Governance and Compliance Coordinator must tell the CEO.

If the CRO believes that a complainant is behaving unreasonably, they must tell the CEO who will review the situation. The CEO is responsible for making decisions about what to do.

If a person continues to behave disrespectfully to staff, PWDA may revoke their membership or refuse to provide them with services. We would only do this in extreme circumstances. Only the CEO and Board can make these decisions.

PWDA will ensure that unreasonable behaviour does not stop valid complaints from being addressed.

Are there any complaints we don't handle?

If a complaint doesn't relate to PWDA, where appropriate, the Governance and Compliance Coordinator will explain this to the complainant. They will ask them if they consent to PWDA referring them to an agency or agencies that are better placed to help them with the problem.

If it is more than three (3) months since the subject of the complaint last happened, we will tell the complainant it will be more difficult to look into the complaint and deal with any problems. However, PWDA will try to deal with the complaint especially if it is about a serious matter.

How is the complaint managed?

The CRO will investigate the complaint. They will check the facts and gather all the relevant information, including speaking with the complainant and any other people involved in the complaint.

If the CRO decides the complaint was justified, they will tell the complainant.

If the CRO decides the complaint was not justified, they will tell the complainant in writing why they made this decision. They will also tell them about what they can do if they are unhappy with this result, including further options at PWDA and contact details for external complaints organisations. These organisations are listed on page 15 of this policy

If the CRO's investigation shows that there should be disciplinary or other corrective action against a staff member, PWDA will do this using the relevant PWDA policies and procedures.

How long does it take?

PWDA aims to handle and close off most complaints within 14 days. Only more serious and/or complex complaints should take any longer than this.

Confidentiality

PWDA deals with complaints in strict confidence. We will only tell people who need to know about the complaint. This will include the CEO or Board, any people the complaint is about, and anyone else who has information that will help with investigating and resolving the complaint.

In certain cases, the law says PWDA must tell other agencies about a complaint. For example, if the complaint includes or suggests allegations about criminal conduct, we must tell the police. If a complaint involves current serious risk of harm to a child, we must tell local child protection authorities.

It is also possible for a Court to subpoena a complaint file, and PWDA must provide it by law.

What is the difference between informal and formal resolution?

Informal complaint resolution is when the complainant and other people involved work together to develop a way to solve the problem. If required, the CRO can help to facilitate this.

Formal complaint resolution is when the CRO investigates and makes decisions about the complaint.

What kinds of complaints will never be dealt with informally?

PWDA will never deal informally with any complaint that includes claims of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation or where there is a significant power imbalance between the complainant and the person or people the complaint is about. PWDA will always deal formally with these complaints. If there is any immediate or ongoing risk to a person, and/or the situation or incident must be reported, we do this immediately.

How will the outcomes of the complaint resolution process be delivered?

If actions need to be taken as a result of a complaint resolution process, the CRO will document these in a Complaint Resolution Action Plan Form (Attachment B).

The CEO/Board will monitor the Complaint Resolution Action Plan, via the Governance and Compliance Coordinator, to make sure that all actions are completed.

What happens if the complaint raises broader issues?

Some complaints will just result in resolving a complaint for an individual. But other complaints may show that there are broader issues that PWDA needs to work on. For example, the complaint might highlight a problem with a PWDA policy, or a problem in our administrative systems or how we work.

PWDA will research, document, and learn from any broader issues uncovered through individual complaints, to help us continuously improve our work,

The CRO will say if there are any broader issues when they report to the CEO or Board, when finalising a complaint. It is then up to the CEO or Board to develop a plan to address these broader issues.

What happens if a person disagrees with the outcomes of a formal complaint resolution process?

People involved in a formal complaint can ask the CEO or Board to review the CRO's decisions.

The CEO or Board will review the complaint handling process and the outcomes decided by the CRO. The CEO/Board can decide on different outcomes.

The CEO/Board may also decide that there needs to be more investigation of the complaint. They will say what needs to be investigated and how it will be done.

The CEO/Board's decision of the review will be final. However, people can still raise their concerns with external complaint agencies. Refer to the section on External Complaint Agencies below for more information.

How does PWDA keep records of complaints?

The PWDA Governance and Compliance Coordinator maintains a Complaint Register, as well as individual files about each complaint. They will give each complaint a unique identification number.

The Complaints Register sets out:

- the date the complaint was received.
- the name of the complainant and respondent.
- the name of the CRO who handled the complaint.
- the methods/strategies used – what was done - to resolve the complaint.
- the date the complaint was finalised.
- the final status of the complaint – whether it was withdrawn, resolved informally, substantiated, substantiated in part, not substantiated, taken further with CEO or Board and the outcome of that.

PWDA stores all documents relating to a complaint in a single complaint file. There is a paper file and an electronic file. Each file and every document in the file is marked with the complaint's unique identification number. We file the documents in date order – in the order we receive them. The CRO's Report and any Complaint Resolution Action Plan developed to resolve the complaint are placed as the first documents in the files. Closed complaint files are kept in secure storage for a period of seven (7) years, then destroyed.

External complaint agencies

The Complaints Resolution and Referral Service

The Complaints Resolution and Referral Service is a free service for people with disability who use Australian Government funded services including Disability Advocacy services.

To make a complaint:

- Call **1800 880 052** (toll free)
- Callers who are Deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can contact the National Relay Service (NRS) by calling **1800 555 677** then asking for **1800 880 052**
- Callers from a non-English speaking background can use the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by calling **13 14 50**
- **Submit your complaint via the Online Complaints Form**
<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/contacts/online-complaint-form>

State and Territory Organisations

Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

Human Rights Commissioner ACT

Web: www.hrc.act.gov.au

Email: human.rights@act.gov.au

Phone: (02) 6205 2222

SMS: 0466 169 997

TTY: (02) 6205 1666

New South Wales

Ombudsman NSW

Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 9286 1000

Toll free: 1800 451 524 (outside Sydney metro)

Northern Territory

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner

Web: www.hcsc.nt.gov.au

Email: hcsc@nt.gov.au

Phone: (08) 8999 1969

Toll free: 1800 004 474

Queensland

Ombudsman Queensland

Web: www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Phone: (07) 3005 7000

Toll free: 1800 068 908

South Australia

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner

Web: www.hcsc.sa.gov.au

Email: info@hcsc.sa.gov.au

Phone: (08) 8226 8666

Toll free: 1800 232 007 (from Country SA lines)

Tasmania

Ombudsman Tasmania

Web: www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Phone : 1800 001 170 (Toll free within Tasmania)

Victoria

Disability Services Commissioner

Web: odsc.vic.gov.au

Email: complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 8608 5780

Toll free: 1800 677 342

TTY: 1300 726 563

Western Australia

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

Web: www.hadsco.wa.gov.au

Email: mail@hadsco.wa.gov.au

Phone: (08) 6551 7600

Administration: (08) 6551 7620

Country freecall: 1800 813 583

TTY: (08) 6551 7640

Related documents

Relevant legislation, regulations and standards

- National Disability Services Standards
- ACNC Standards
- ACFID Code of Conduct

Related PWDA policy documents

- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback – Easy Read
- Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Board Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Individual Group Advocacy Policy (will need to be updated to reflect content and timeframes in this Compliments, Complaints and Feedback policy)
- Privacy Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
- Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Risk Management Plan
- Continuous Improvement Plan

Supporting documents

- Attachment A: Complaint form
- Attachment B: Complaint Resolution Action Plan form

Complaint Resolution Process

Staff should use these tables as a guide when managing a complaint. The tables set out the steps to be taken, timeframes and responsibilities for each stage of the complaint resolution

process. PWDA aims to handle and close off most complaints within 14 days. Only more serious and/or complex complaints should take any longer than this.

Stage 1: Intake and assessment

Step	Timeframe (business days)	Procedure	Responsibility
Step 1	Within 1 day	<p>Receive complaint and explain to complainant that we will follow PWDA privacy Policy when handling their complaint. We will only share with people who need to be involved to help resolve the problem.</p> <p>Record and forward basic details of the complaint and complainant contact information (On Attachment A. Complaint form) to the Governance and Compliance Coordinator.</p>	Staff member who receives the complaint.
Step 2	Within 3 days	Write to or email the complainant, to let them know PWDA has received their complaint.	Governance and Compliance coordinator
Step 3	Within 3 days	Enter the complaint details into the PWDA Complaints Register.	Governance and Compliance Coordinator
Step 4	Within 3 days	<p>Make an initial assessment of the complaint to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if it raises criminal or child protection issues that must be referred to the police or other appropriate authorities. • If there are any matters that need to be taken to a Senior Manager/Director. • If the complaint is suitable for an informal complaint resolution approach. • If a complainant or respondent's access needs or barriers are directly relevant to the complaint. If so, the CRO will work to make sure the process and resolution is inclusive of this. • If the complainant requires interpreter or translation services. If the complainant requires 	Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO)

		<p>an independent (non-PWDA) individual advocate. Contact the complainant to check details and discuss the complaint and next steps. Confirm any support needs and confirm their preferred way of being contacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is anything in the complaint which will need external, expert complaint resolution skills. <p>Write to or email the respondent to the complaint to tell them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a complaint has been received by the CRO. • the name of the CRO who will handle the complaint. • about the allegations, and any evidence, the complainant has put forward to support the allegations. 	
Step 5	Within 5 days	<p>Contact the complainant first, and then the respondent, to ask if they are willing to take part in an informal complaint resolution process, or if a formal process is required.</p> <p>Make a decision about whether the complaint will be dealt with formally or informally</p>	<p>CRO</p> <p>CRO, in consultation with the CEO/Board</p>

Stage 2A: Complaint resolution – informal resolution process

There are two options for handling a complaint informally. Option 1 involves a facilitated meeting between the complainant and respondent/s. In Option 2, the Complaints Resolution Officer communicates with each person separately. Consider which option is more appropriate depending on the type of complaint, level of seriousness or complexity, whether the complainant and/or respondent want to meet and any other relevant factors.

Option 1

Step	Timeframe (business days)	Procedure	Responsibility
Step 1	Within 7 days	<p>Facilitate a meeting between the complainant and respondent.</p> <p>Invite the complainant to explain their complaint to the respondent. Ask them what it would take to resolve it.</p> <p>Invite the respondent to reply to the complainant about the complaint. Ask them to reply to the complainant's proposal to resolve the complaint.</p> <p>Allow each person to make their statements without interruption.</p> <p>Facilitate a conversation, until both can agree on how to resolve the matter.</p> <p>Document the agreement. If required, write a Complaint Resolution Action Plan.</p> <p>If it looks like both people cannot agree on how to resolve the matter within a reasonable period of time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the complainant if they want to continue with the complaint. • If yes, ask each person if they think there is a good chance of resolving the complaint informally, or if they now want to proceed with a formal approach to resolve the matter. <p>If they want to continue informally, ask each person to think about a genuine proposal for resolving the complaint. Say you will contact them within 2 days to ask for their proposal.</p>	CRO

Step 3	<p>Within 10 days</p> <p>Complete and close within 14 days</p>	<p>Contact each person and ask for each one's proposal for resolving the complaint. If a proposal is not reasonable, discuss this with them and try to come to a useful proposal.</p> <p>Look at both proposals, identifying areas of common ground, areas of difference, and think about some constructive ways to resolve the complaint.</p> <p>Talk these through with each person and try to reach a resolution that they are satisfied with. If so, document the agreement and if required, write a Complaint Resolution Action Plan.</p> <p>If there is still no reasonable chance of settling the matter, end the informal complaint resolution process.</p> <p>If the complainant wants to continue with the complaint, begin a formal complaint resolution process. Tell the respondent in writing that this is happening.</p>	CRO
Step 4	<p>Within 7 days of resolution of the complaint, or termination of the informal complaint resolution process</p>	<p>Write a report on the outcome of the complaint resolution process outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method used to resolve the complaint. • The outcome of the complaint resolution process. • The action plan agreed between the parties, if any. • Any further action required. • Any systemic or other issues raised by the complaint that need to be addressed. <p>Email to the Governance and Compliance Coordinator so they can update or close off the complaint in the register.</p>	CRO

Option 2

Step	Timeframe	Procedure	Responsibility
Step 1	Within 3 days	Ask the respondent to reply to the complaint either over the phone, face-to-face, in writing or by email.	CRO
Step 2	Within 7 days	<p>Let the complainant know how the respondent replied. Ask the complainant if they feel this resolves their complaint.</p> <p>If not, ask the complainant: Why the respondent's reply is not enough. They can answer verbally or in writing. If it is verbal, write it down and get the complainant to sign it.</p> <p>Ask if they want any further action. If so, do they want to continue informally or move to a formal process to resolve their complaint.</p>	CRO
Step 3	Within 9 days	<p>Let the respondent know about the complainant's response to their reply and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (If relevant), if they would like to make any further reply. If so, ask the respondent to make this reply either verbally or in writing. If it is verbal, write it down and get the respondent to sign it. • If they want to continue informally or now want to move to a formal process to deal with the complaint. <p>If required, develop a Complaint Resolution Action Plan to help resolve the complaint.</p>	CRO
Step 5	Within 7 days	Write a report on the outcome of the complaint resolution process, outlining:	CRO

	<p>of resolution of the complaint, or termination of the complaint resolution process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methods/strategies used to resolve the complaint. • The outcome of the complaint resolution process. • The action plan agreed between the parties, if any. • Any further action required. • Any systemic or other issues raised by the complaint that need to be addressed. <p>Email to the Governance and Compliance Coordinator so they can update or close off the complaint in the register.</p>	
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Stage 2B: Complaint resolution – formal resolution process

Step	Timeframe	Procedure	Responsibility
Step 1	Within 3 days of receiving formal complaint.	<p>Meet with the complainant and write a final list of allegations on which the complaint is based. Document any evidence the complainant offers to support the allegations.</p> <p>Get the complainant to sign this written list of allegations to confirm they are accurate.</p> <p>Ask the complainant what they want to happen as a result of making their complaint.</p>	CRO
Step 2	Within 5 days	<p>Develop a Complaint Investigation Plan, setting out how you will handle the complaint.</p> <p>The complaint investigation plan is to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a rigorous and transparent investigation of the matters raised in the complaint. • All relevant sources of evidence are identified. • The process is fair for both the complainant and the respondent. 	CRO, in consultation with the CEO/Board

Step 3	Within 7 days	<p>Provide the respondent with details of the complaint allegations, including an outline of any evidence. Ask for a reply in writing.</p> <p>The respondent can give you a verbal response to the complaint. However, you must immediately write down the response and get the respondent to sign it.</p>	CRO
Step 4	Within 10 days	<p>Investigate the complaint: You can ask for further information from the complainant and respondent, or any other person, to help you to make a decision about the complaint.</p> <p>Also, review any relevant documentary evidence, including any PWDA policy and procedure that may be relevant to the issues raised in the complaint.</p> <p>Tell both the complainant and respondent if any new issues or evidence emerges during your inquiries. Ask them both if they want to provide any further information or make comments.</p>	CRO
Step 5	Within 14 days	<p>Decide whether the complaint is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantiated (PWDA agrees the complaint is valid) • Substantiated in part • Not substantiated <p>Write to both the complainant and the respondent, explaining the reasons for this decision.</p> <p>Include information in the letter about PWDA's internal review process; if either person is unhappy with the decision they have the choice to take the matter further.</p> <p>Also include contact details for external complaint resolution organisations.</p>	CRO

Step 6	Within 21 days	<p>Write a report on the outcome of the complaint resolution process, outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method used to resolve the complaint. • The outcome of the complaint resolution process. • A Complaint Resolution Action Plan to address the outcomes of complaint investigation, if required. • Any systemic or other issues raised by the complaint that need to be addressed. <p>Email to the Governance and Compliance Coordinator so they can close off the complaint in the register.</p>	CRO
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Stage 3: Internal review - outcomes reached through a formal complaint resolution process

This process is only used if the complainant is unhappy with the CRO's reply and/or resolution and wants to take the decision further for review.

Step	Timeframe	Procedure	Responsibility
Step 1		<p>A complainant or respondent must write to ask for a review of the outcomes of a formal complaint resolution process within 28 days of receiving the CRO reply.</p> <p>They should write to the CEO, or to the Board if the matter involves the CEO.</p> <p>They must include details in their request about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why they believe the outcomes were wrong, and • Any evidence they have to supports their claims. <p>If the person cannot write their review request themselves, the CEO/ Board may appoint a PWDA staff member to do so on their behalf.</p>	Complainant CEO/Board

		The person asking for the review must then sign it.	
Step 2	Within 7 days	<p>The CEO/ Board then reviews the formal complaint resolution process, and the outcomes reached, to decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the process has been fair and reasonable to the people involved in the complaint. • If the evidence supports the decisions that were made. • If any recommended actions are reasonable, based on what was learned in the process. <p>The CEO/ Board decides whether the outcomes of the formal complaint resolution process are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld (agreed with) • Upheld in part • Not upheld <p>The CEO/Board must provide reasons for their decision.</p> <p>The CEO/Board may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the outcomes of the formal complaint resolution process. • Ask for further investigation of the complaint, and decide what will be investigated and how it will be done, or • Substitute a correct or preferable decision. <p>The CEO/ Board’s decision on the review is final. However if a complainant or respondent is unhappy with the decision, they can raise their concerns with external complaint agencies.</p>	CEO/Board
Step 3	Within 7 days after the decision reached by the CEO/Board	<p>Write to the complainant and respondent, telling them the outcome of the review of the formal complaint resolution process, and explaining the reasons for their decision.</p> <p>Include information and contact details for</p>	CEO/Board

		external complaint resolution organisations. in the letter. If either person is unhappy with the decision they have the choice to take the matter further.	
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Attachment A: Complaint form

Name:

Address:

Contact Information:

Home phone Work phone

Mobile phone TTY phone

Email: Facsimile

Please tell us about your complaint (add more pages if you need to)

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Tell us if you have any information, such as documents or a witness that might help us investigate your complaint? If possible, attach copies of any documents.

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Tell us what you think should happen to resolve your complaint?

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Your signature:

Date:

Attachment B: Complaint resolution action plan form

Complaint Number

Date Received.....

Date Finalised

Complainant

Complaint Resolution Officer

Action Plan

Action required	Who responsible	Completion date
(add rows as required)		

Authorised by:

CEO or President, PWDA Board

Date: