



PARKSIDE COUNSELLING & MEDIATION CENTRE COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Overview

Parkside Counselling & Mediation Centre (PC&MC) is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using services provided by PC&MC or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

The organisation will provide a complaints management procedure that:

- Is simple and easy to use.
- Is available to all members, clients and stakeholders via the PC&MC website, or on request.
- Ensures that complaints are responded to promptly.
- Ensures complaints are fairly assessed.
- Is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice.
- Complies with legislative requirements.

Our commitment

If you make a complaint to PC&MC you can expect that we will:

- Treat you with respect.
- Listen to your concerns.
- Tell you what to expect while your complaint is being investigated.
- Assist you to obtain independent support if appropriate.
- Carry out the complaint handling process in a fair and open way.
- Provide reasons for decisions that are made.
- Protect your privacy.

What can I make a complaint about?

You can complain about any aspect of our interaction with you. This may include difficulties in accessing a service, administrative issues, communication difficulties, inappropriate behaviour, lack of respect for individual rights, or issues related to the treatment or care itself. A person may also lodge a complaint if a documented process was not followed, or if the process was flawed.



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Procedure for complaints management

The person managing the complaint will be responsible for:

1. Registering the complaint:

- Registering the complaint in the PC&MC complaints register
- Informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and time frame ensuring they are aware of all avenues of complaint.
- Clarifying the complainants preferred methods for communication.
- Ensuring the complainant is aware of their rights, responsibilities and alternative processes.
- Assessing the need for and arranging alternative third party led investigation and resolution.
- Clarifying any remedies that the complainant is seeking should the complaint be found.

2. Investigating the complaint:

- Examining the complaint within 5 business days of the complaint being received.
- Ensuring that the investigation is conducted with due process.
- Within 10 business days of the complaint being received, informing the complainant by letter/email of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected time frame for resolution.
- Endeavouring to have complaints or appeals investigated and resolved within 20 business days of being received. If this time frame cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons and of the alternative time frame for resolution.
- Collecting all appropriate information to ensure a fully informed investigation.
- Preparing a summary report of the investigation upon which a determination can be made

3. Resolving the complaint:

- Making a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 20 working days of the complaint being received.
- Ensuring that every endeavour has been made to facilitate a collaborative resolution through Alternate Dispute Resolution.
- Informing the complainant of the outcome and any options for further action if required.

What if I am unhappy with the resolution?

If you are not happy with the outcomes of a complaint, you may be able to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman, AASW or with the Health and Community Complaints Commissioner. These offices will determine if it has the power to investigate your complaint.



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Record keeping

A register of complaints will be kept by PC&MC. The register will be maintained by the Director (PC&MC) and will record the following for each complaint:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action
- Copies of all correspondence and other materials received by PC&MC in connection with any complaints will be kept for 7 years.
- The complaints register and files will be confidential and access is restricted to the Director.

A statistical summary of complaints and appeals will also be kept by PC&MC and maintained by the Director. The Director will be responsible for preparing a report on received feedback and complaints once a quarter.

Related policies and documents

Information for complainants regarding serious ethical misconduct - AASW

By Laws on Ethic - AASW

Ethical Guideline - Information Management (AASW)

By-laws for the investigation and discipline of members – Resolution Institute

Code of Ethics – Resolution Institute

Compliments Suggestions Complaints – Resolution Institute

Director Parkside Counselling & Mediation Centre

Date March 2018

