

Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures – Outline

Cancer Council Victoria has a single Complaints and Compliments Policy (see below).

However, due to the diverse range of activities and customer interactions across the Cancer Council, each Division and some specific services have their own procedures for recording and responding to compliments and for recording and handling complaints. Every complaints-handling procedure, however, must adhere to the same principles, which are designed to resolve complaints fairly and rapidly.

Cancer Council Victoria Complaints and Compliments Policy

Policy statement

The Cancer Council strives to serve the needs of our “customers”, whether they are users of our services, purchasers of our products, collaborators in our research, or supporters and community members with whom we interact.

Compliments, complaints and other feedback can help us identify when and how we exceed or fall short of our customers’ expectations. All complaints and compliments must be recorded and reported to enable us to continually improve our services, products and interactions.

All Cancer Council customers have the right, and should be encouraged, to complain about a product, service or customer service interaction if it does not meet their expectations.

Complaints and negative feedback, when acknowledged respectfully and treated seriously, present an opportunity to improve, build trust with our customers and enhance the Cancer Council’s reputation.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity, in a way that respects and values the needs and expectations of the complainant, can be one of the most important factors in recovering a complainant’s confidence about the Cancer Council. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system assists us to resolve issues that have the potential to diminish public confidence in the Cancer Council.

The Cancer Council is committed to providing an open, effective and easy to use complaints management process for the complainant and, if applicable, the subject(s) of the complaint. This process protects the confidentiality of all parties involved. The Cancer Council is also committed to ensuring the process respects and suits the communication and support needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and their carers and/or parents. People who provide complaints and negative feedback must always be treated with courtesy and sensitivity, and in a manner that respects diversity of opinion and expectation. Complainants and/or their representative should be involved in the complaints management process as much as possible. Children and young people, vulnerable adults and people who speak a language other than English should be supported to participate actively in the complaints-handling process

Definitions

Complainant – person or organisation or their representative, making a complaint

Complaint – expression of dissatisfaction made to the Cancer Council related to its product or service or customer service interaction, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

Compliment – an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude made to the Cancer Council related to a product, service or customer service interaction

Customer - person or organization that could or does receive a product or a service, or has a customer service interaction with the Cancer Council, that is intended for or required by this person or organization

Customer satisfaction – perception to the degree to which the customer's expectations have been fulfilled

Customer service – interaction of Cancer Council staff member(s) with the customer

Feedback - opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our products, services, customer service interaction or complaint handling where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected

Product – any item gifted or for retail sale by the Cancer Council or any output of a service

Service – any activity or program undertaken to provide support to consumers and communities or to meet Cancer Council’s strategic objectives

Principles for Complaints-Handling across the Cancer Council

Due to the diverse range of activities and interactions with customers across the organisation, Cancer Council Divisions and specific services have their own processes for recording and responding to compliments and for recording and handling complaints. The complaints-handling process in each Division and specific service, however, must adhere to the following principles:

- the complaints-handling process must be accessible, responsive to the needs and expectations of the complainant, and easy for the complainant to navigate
- the complaints-handling process must have clear escalation points should the complaint be related to an incident that must be considered in the context of CCV policies, including the Child Safe Policy, Privacy Policy, and Behaviour and Conduct Policy, and mandatory reporting obligations (see Table 1)
- each complaint must be assessed on its merits and addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints-handling process
- the complainant must be supported to seek an appropriate resolution, commensurate with the impact of any adverse event
- any data collected must be relevant, correct, complete, meaningful and useful to handling the complaint, and stored, used and disclosed in line with Cancer Council Privacy Policy
- the confidentiality of the complainant and any staff member(s) involved must always be protected
- complaints must be handled as expeditiously as possible (with the aim of resolving all complaints within ten (10) business days), and regular updates must be provided to the complainant if the resolution is delayed
- staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible
- complainant(s) should be provided with feedback on what happened and why, and how the Cancer Council will minimise the risk of the incident happening again
- if the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, they must be provided with alternative complaint resolution pathways and review mechanisms
- timeframes for complaint resolution must be monitored and reported

Table 1. Complaints that require immediate escalation

Complaint	Immediate escalation to	Relevant CCV policies and procedures
Inappropriate or improper language or conduct towards a child or young person	Head, People, Leadership & Teams	Child Safe Policy
Serious misconduct, such as abuse, exploitation or fraud	Head, People, Leadership & Teams	Behaviour and Conduct Policy
Suspected data or privacy breach	Head of Division	Privacy Policy and Incident Management System

[Procedure: Quitline compliment-handling](#)

When a Quitline counsellor receives a compliment, they should:

- Sincerely thank the caller for their compliment and ask how their action/conversation helped the caller or what the caller liked about the action/conversation, i.e. attempt to ascertain what prompted the compliment
- After the call ends, record the compliment in the Complaints and Compliments Form with information on what prompted the compliment, and email to the Quitline Manager

[Procedure: Quitline handling of complaints and negative feedback on a call](#)

When a Quitline counsellor receives a complaint or negative feedback they should:

- ask the client to explain how an interaction has not met their expectations if they express dissatisfaction
- listen actively, empathise and acknowledge that the interaction did not meet the client's expectations

- express regret and provide an apology if the client is dissatisfied with an interaction¹
- if an apology is provided, ensure it is sincere, and accepts responsibility for what occurred and the impact
- explain what happened and why (without making excuses)
- if the client remains dissatisfied and the issue is unresolved, the counsellor should offer to make a complaint on the caller's behalf to the Quitline Manager
- If the caller wishes to make a complaint, the Quitline counsellor should record the details of the complaint in the Complaints & Compliments Form and email to the Quitline Manager
- The Quitline counsellor should advise the complainant that the Quitline Manager will call them within two (2) business working days and that they can find information about the complaints process on the quit.org.au/quitline webpage

Procedure: Complaints from a child or young person

The [Complaints and Compliments Policy](#) sets out the Cancer Council's commitment to support children and young people to make a complaint or provide negative feedback. Quitline counsellors should take every opportunity to check in with a client who is a child or young person to ensure they understand and are comfortable with the information and counselling being provided.

If a complaint is made by a child or young person, the Quitline complaints-handling procedures should be followed. However, the counsellor and Quitline Manager should recognise and respond to the likelihood that a child or young person might feel intimidated in giving feedback to an adult.

A Quitline worker receiving and responding to a complaint or negative feedback from a child or young person should:

- Listen and be respectful about their concerns
 - never tell a child or young person that they "don't understand"

¹ *Wrongs Act 1958* – section 14J provides that in the case of civil proceedings where the death or injury of a person is an issue, or is relevant, an apology does not constitute either an admission or liability, or an admission of unprofessional conduct, carelessness, incompetence or unsatisfactory professional performance.

- Be understanding and encourage the child or young person to explain their situation in their own time
 - there is always something to learn for service improvement when a child or young person makes a complaint
- Believe what they are saying, take it seriously and note it down
- Be helpful and offer advice and information about the complaints process, what the Quitline's next steps will be and what they can expect to happen

Procedure: Quitline complaint-handling

The Quitline Manager is responsible for complaint-handling, and will:

1. log all Complaints and Compliments Forms in the Complaint & Compliment Register
2. listen to the recorded call (if required) or review the complaint (if in written form) and allocate the complaint to the appropriate person in the Cancer Council, if it is not a complaint about the Quitline, or escalate according to the requirements for escalation in the Complaints & Compliments Policy
3. call the complainant within two (2) working days to acknowledge and discuss the complaint
4. ask the complainant to provide more information about what happened, actively listen, empathise and acknowledge that the service or interaction did not meet the complainant's expectations
5. express regret and provide an apology that the Quitline has failed to meet the customer's expectations¹
6. explain what happened and why (without making excuses), and what will be done to attempt to resolve the issue as soon as possible
7. if the complaint has not been resolved during this discussion, ensure there is clarity about the requested outcome and what the complainant would see as a reasonable resolution
8. provide information on the complaint review process, such as who will do it, how we will communicate our progress during the review, and the timeframe for resolution
9. request contact details (if necessary) to permit Quitline to provide a written outcome

10. keep the complainant updated on progress towards resolution and communicate the outcome in writing, with the goal of resolving the complaint within ten (10) business days
11. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, offer to have the process and decision reviewed, and explain the outcome review process
12. The resolution, and timeframe for resolution, must be logged on the Complaint and Compliment Register

Procedure: Quitline complaint review

The Quitline Manager will use their professional judgement and Quitline policies and procedures in considering the complaint and the severity of its impact, to devise an appropriate resolution.

The resolution must be client-centred and, as much as possible, aim to regain or build client trust in the service. The resolution must also be proportionate to the severity of the impact on the client.

Procedure: Quitline outcome review

If the complainant wishes the outcome to be reviewed, the Quitline Manager will request the Quit Director review the process and the decision (not the complaint itself)

- If the complaint handling process has not been followed properly or the decision needs to be revisited, the Quit Director will direct the Quitline Manager to take appropriate action or over-rule the Quitline Manager's decision
- The Quit Director will communicate in writing with the complainant, confirming the correct process has been followed and confirming or amending the outcome
- In this communication, the Quit Director will provide the complainant with an explanation of what further action they can take at the conclusion of the complaint investigation, with contact details of appropriate external agencies (refer **Appendix II: Agencies to which complaints about the Quitline can be made by a Quitline client or client representative**).

Procedure: Quitline complaint and compliment reporting

A report drawn from the Quitline Complaints and Compliments Register must be provided to the Property Logistics Manager every quarter for reporting to the Board Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, with the report to contain:

- Number(s) of complaints/compliments received
- Nature of complaints/compliments
- Numbers of complaints resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant
- Numbers of complaints not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant
- Number(s) of complaints outstanding at end of quarter
- Average time to resolution e.g. one week, one month, etc
- Cost to the organisation, if any, of resolving complaints

All complaints and compliments must be provided to the Quitline Quality Committee every month to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Appendix I: Quitline Complaint and Compliments Form

Our service is committed to providing high quality care and services and meeting your needs. We value your feedback, including complaints in line with the Complaints and Compliments Policy.

Please let us know what we do well and where we can improve our services.

Indicate your responses below with an "X".

This is a:	Complaint		Compliment	
-------------------	-----------	--	------------	--

Section 1: Your details

Do you want to remain anonymous?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Personal details

First Name:	
Last Name:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	

Do you require an interpreter?

Yes		No		If yes , which language?	
-----	--	----	--	---------------------------------	--

Are you providing feedback on another person's behalf?

No (<i>go to Section 4</i>)		Yes	
-------------------------------	--	-----	--

Section 2: Feedback made on another person's behalf

Please provide the following details about the person on whose behalf you are acting:

First Name:	
Last Name:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	

Are you a legal representative for the person who received the service (e.g. parent of a child under 18 years or guardian)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If **yes**, please provide details:

--

Does the person know you are making a complaint on their behalf?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If **no**, please provide the reason why:

--

Are we able to speak with the person who received the service?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If **no**, please provide the reason why:

--

Section 3: Other person’s consent for feedback made on their behalf

If you are providing this feedback on another person’s behalf, we require the consent of the other person to obtain and pass on personal information relevant to this feedback. Please provide evidence of this consent when submitting this form, e.g., signed consent (as provided below) from the person on whose behalf you are acting.

I, (insert name of person giving consent) give permission to (insert name of person receiving consent) to provide or collect relevant information on my behalf to assist with this complaint/compliment or feedback, as necessary.

Signature:		Date:	
------------	--	-------	--

Section 4: Please describe the incident you are complaining about or complimenting

Please provide details of the incident, including what events led to making the complaint, compliment or feedback, approximate dates and who was involved.

--

Section 5: What outcomes would you like as a result of providing your feedback?

Section 6: Privacy

The Quitline is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and handle personal information that you provide on this feedback form for the purpose of investigating and responding.

The Quitline will only use your information in accordance with relevant privacy and other laws.

For more information about our privacy policy please go to:

www.quit.org.au/articles/privacy-policy

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback about our service.

Appendix II. Agencies to which complaints about the Quitline can be made by a Quitline client or client representative

Complainants must be advised by Quitline workers of their option to take their complaint to an external oversight body at any stage of the complaints process. This information is also available on the Quitline website page at: www.quit.org.au/quitline

1. Victorian agencies

Department of Health VIC

The department responds to feedback about any part of people's experience with the department and the services it funds, including the Quitline. Telephone: **1300 884 706** Web: [Making a complaint](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint) <<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>>.

Ombudsman VIC

Receives and investigates complaints about decisions and actions made by state and local governments as well as private and non-government organisations which perform a public function. Telephone: 9613 6222 or regional: 1800 806 314 Web: [Victorian Ombudsman](https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au) <<https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au>>.

Disability Services Commissioner VIC

Works with people with a disability, and disability services to resolve complaints. Telephone: **1800 677 342 (free call)**; TTY service for people with hearing or speech difficulties **1300 726 563** Web: [Disability Services Commissioner](https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au) <<https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au>>.

Health Complaints Commissioner VIC

Receives and resolves complaints about healthcare and the handling of health information in Victoria. Telephone: **1300 582 113** Web: [Health Complaints Commissioner](https://hcc.vic.gov.au) <<https://hcc.vic.gov.au>>.

Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

Promotes fair public access to information while ensuring its proper use and protection.

Telephone: **1300 006 842** Web: [Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner](#)

<<https://ovic.vic.gov.au/>>.

Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

Promotes fair public access to information while ensuring its proper use and protection.

Telephone: **1300 006 842** Web: [Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner](#)

<<https://ovic.vic.gov.au/>>.

2. South Australian agencies

Drug and Alcohol Service SA

The department responds to feedback about any part of people's experience with the services it funds, including the SA Quitline. Telephone: (08) 7425 5000 Web: [DASSA – SA Health](#) <www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/dassa> Email: HealthDASSAGeneral@sa.gov.au

SA Health

The department responds to feedback about any part of people's experience with the services it funds, including the SA Quitline funded through the Drug and Alcohol Service SA. Telephone: (08) 8226 2567. Web: [SA Health](#) <www.sahealth.sa.gov.au>

South Australian Ombudsman

Investigates complaints about South Australian government and local government agencies. Telephone: (08) 8226 8699 Toll free: 1800 182 150 Web: [Ombudsman SA](#) <<https://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/>>.

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner SA

Helps consumers, carers and service providers– this includes government, private and non-government health and community services – to try and resolve complaints.

Telephone: **1800 232 007** Web: [Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner](https://hcsc.sa.gov.au/)
<<https://hcsc.sa.gov.au/>>.

Privacy Committee of South Australia

Responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Information Privacy Principles
Instruction by South Australian public sector agencies. Telephone: (08) 8204 8786. Web:
[Privacy Committee](https://archives.sa.gov.au/general-information/privacy-committee/privacy-committee-sa) < <https://archives.sa.gov.au/general-information/privacy-committee/privacy-committee-sa>>

South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC)

Assists people to resolve complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation.
Telephone: (08) 8207 1977 or for Country Callers on 1800 188 163 Web: Equal Opportunity
Commission <https://www.eoc.sa.gov.au/>

