

Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

Purpose

This policy ensures that SANE(SANE's) feedback and complaints management system:

- allows any person to make a complaint or provide feedback easily
- facilitates feedback and complaints by cultivating a supportive environment in which the community can have confidence that their feedback or complaint will be addressed
- is simple, accessible and easy to use
- is effectively communicated and promoted to all donors, clients, program participants, volunteers and stakeholders
- ensures complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with international legislative requirements and Australian Standards, including:
 - » ISO 10002:2018, Quality Management – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations
 - » AS 10002:2022, Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.

Policy Statement

SANE upholds people's right to provide feedback on their experience, offer suggestions for improvement, lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision made by the organisation. SANE encourages and actively seeks feedback from service users, advocates, employees, members of the public or any other entity. All feedback and concerns that are raised will be addressed in way that ensures access and equity, fairness, accountability, and transparency.

SANE recognises that feedback and complaints are an integral part of quality improvement systems and a valuable resource for evaluating strengths and weaknesses in new and existing policies, systems, and services at SANE. They can be used to identify both local and complex problems across SANE and to improve our programs, services, events, communications, and activities.

Guiding Principles

SANE enables feedback and complaints by:

- providing a free, accessible, safe and supportive feedback and complaints process that provides procedural fairness for all complainants
- ensuring that people know that they have the right to make a complaint and they will not experience any detriment or reprisals as a result of making a complaint
- providing information about where to lodge a complaint, how to make a complaint and how complaints will be managed, including referring complaints to external agencies
- providing information about what can or cannot be achieved by a complaints process, and assisting anyone who wishes to make a complaint
- ensuring that personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used as permitted under SANE's Privacy Policy and relevant legislation
- adopting feedback and complaints management practices that are culturally responsive and safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ensuring that complainants have the right to be supported by a friend, an advocate, an interpreter, a community Elder or independent entity
- ensuring that complaints can be made anonymously, with complainants advised of the limitations of an anonymous complaint
- ensuring that all SANE service users, Board Members and staff are given information about SANE's feedback and complaints management system as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing feedback and complaints.

SANE manages feedback and complaints by:

- welcoming and encouraging feedback on all SANE activities and ensuring any person who wishes to make a complaint can do so
- treating all complaints and feedback seriously and respecting the time and effort put into providing feedback on SANE and our activities
- ensuring that complaints raised about individual staff members are handled in a way that recognises both people's rights to raise concerns as well as an employee's right to feel safe, supported and respected in the workplace
- responding to complainants in a respectful, fair and objective way
- adhering to SANE's Open Disclosure Policy where applicable
- responding to complaints within a reasonable time (Generally, complainants will receive a receipt of acknowledgement within two working days of submitting their complaint, and complaints will be resolved within 28 days after receipt of acknowledgement)
- monitoring the progress of complaints through a central register and communicating with complainants about the progress of their complaint
- ensuring a child's safety, wellbeing and best interests is paramount and any conflict is resolved in favour of the child (please see SANE's Child Safe Policy for more information)
- being culturally responsive and safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- managing complaints with due consideration for actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interests
- providing a clear explanation of the outcome of a decision, any recommendations, review options and any available external review mechanisms

- ensuring employees have the right to feel safe and respected in the workplace
- escalating complaints related to potential issues of risk of harm to service users or staff to the Quality and Clinical Governance Team
- escalating complaints to appropriate external bodies as required under relevant standards and legislation.

Continuous improvement

The Quality and Clinical Governance team will analyse complaints data to identify systemic issues and trends that can be used to implement continuous quality improvement practices. Where appropriate, the information will be made available to relevant departments of the organisation to assist in consistent approaches to service deliverables. Please see SANE's Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement Policy for more information.

Reports will be developed for all relevant stakeholders including SANE's Board and relevant committees, Executive Leadership Team, and Clinical Governance Committee, and will be distributed on a periodic basis.

Evaluation of the feedback and complaints management system

It is the responsibility of the Clinical Governance Committee to review the effectiveness of the feedback and complaints management system including regular evaluation of:

- compliance with this policy and the Feedback and Complaints Management Procedure
- the accuracy and effectiveness of complaints capture, recording and internal reporting
- the time taken to manage and resolve complaints
- the correctness of complaints outcome recording
- monitoring trends and implementation of actions following investigation of feedback and complaints.

Changes to this policy

This policy may change from time to time. Any updated versions of this policy will be posted on our website and will be effective from the date of posting.