

3.5.1 Policy Connections

This policy is compliant with National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 1 Rights and Standard 4 Feedback and Complaints, and the National Association of Community Legal Centres Accreditation Scheme. Relevant legislation includes:

- Disability Services Act 1986 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

This policy is supported by the Midlas Service Charter. This policy does not provide detailed guidance on:

- Worker grievance and dispute management – refer to Midlas Grievance Procedure
- Employee performance management – refer to Performance Management Procedure

3.5.2 Policy Statement

Midlas is committed to delivering quality services. Any person or organisation accessing services and programs provided by the Midlas, or those affected by Midlas' operations, has the right to provide feedback and make a complaint.

Feedback is information provided to Midlas about any aspect of its service, program and activities, while a complaint is any written or verbal statement outlining a problem or concern involving Midlas.

Midlas recognises that clients and stakeholders need avenues to give feedback or raise complaints. The Complaints Management Procedure ensures that complaints received are addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, timeliness, confidentiality, accountability and transparency.

3.5.3 Communicating the Feedback and Complaints Policy

The process for communicating feedback and complaints to Midlas is conveyed to all workers, Board Directors, clients and stakeholders. This information is provided verbally to clients, in the engagement and closure letters, is available on the website and is included in resources and publications as appropriate.

3.5.4 Receiving Complaints and other Feedback

All Workers are able to receive feedback and complaints verbally or in writing. Information on the process for accepting a complaint or managing feedback or other comments can be found in the Complaints Management Procedure. An external agency or support person may be used to make a complaint or provide feedback. Anonymous feedback and complaints can be made through the feedback box, located in reception or via online survey. Anonymous complaints will be addressed as much as possible based on the information provided.

3.5.3 Overview of the Complaints Management Process

The Midlas complaints management procedures are based on a three tiered approach.

Level 1: Before a complaint is lodged, every effort will be made to resolve an issue at the point of contact. Wherever possible Workers will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision. If the complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the issues or concerns are not recorded as a formal complaint. If the complaint contains allegations about a possible breach of the law, the complaint will be escalated to Level 3 and forwarded to the relevant authorities such as the police.

Level 2: Complaints that are unresolved at Level 1 are escalated to a senior Worker within Midlas who is unconnected to the complaint. This senior Worker will facilitate a discussion to attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the issues or concerns are not recorded as a formal complaint.

Level 3: Complaints that are unresolved through senior Worker facilitations will be formally investigated. These complaints are formally recorded. Complaints concerning the CEO are referred to the Chair of the Board for investigation.

Complaints concerning a Director or member of a Board committee are referred to the Chair of the Board. The Chair, or an approved delegate, investigate the complaint. Where the Chair is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be referred to the Vice Chair or another Director of the Board.

3.5.2 Collection, Monitoring and Reporting Feedback and Complaints

Complaints that reach Level 3 are recorded in a complaints register. This information is provided to the Board of the Directors at minimum annually in a report. The CEO is responsible for analysing feedback and complaints and providing recommendations for action to be taken. Recommendations are discussed at Board and/or team meetings.

3.5.3 Responding to Complaints

The findings of an investigation of a Level 3 complaint will be communicated by the investigator (see Complaint Management Procedure for more information).

All other complaints may be responded to by all Workers verbally or in writing as required.

