

PURPOSE

In accordance with Citizens Advice Bureau of WA Inc.'s (CABWA's) commitment to client satisfaction, complaints are acknowledged and acted upon promptly. For the purpose of this policy a complaint is defined as an: Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services or staff, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required: (as defined by the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2022, Guidelines for complaint management in organisations).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a complainant has access to an open and responsive complaints process, whereby complaints are managed fairly, promptly, confidentially, and transparently, with a focus on continuous improvement. It outlines the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, and management in receiving, recording, and resolving complaints, and ensures clients and community members are supported through a respectful and accessible complaints process.

CABWA:

- Manages complaints in a consistent, systematic and responsive manner;
- Provides an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for resolving complaints; and
- Ensures all complaints are heard and equitably resolved as soon as possible

The prompt and effective management of complaints will assist CABWA's ability to identify trends, eliminate causes of complaints and improve CABWA's operational effectiveness. It will also enhance CABWA's reputation and the handling of all complaints should be carried out with this in mind.

The policy aims to reinforce CAB's commitment to client satisfaction, service quality, and continual improvement, while protecting the dignity and rights of both clients and staff. . It provides a basis for ongoing review and analysis of the complaint management system, the management of complaints and any process improvements made to reduce the likelihood of complaints developing into ongoing disputes.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Board of Management members at the Citizens Advice Bureau of WA Inc. (CABWA). It covers the management of all client complaints relating to CAB's services, programs, or personnel, whether received in person, by phone, in writing, or online.

This policy applies to:

- Any complaint made about CABWA services, staff, volunteers, or representatives.
- Feedback or expressions of dissatisfaction received by any branch or through the Head Office
- Complaints relating to all areas of CABWA operations including legal, mediation, information & referral, and financial services.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services or staff, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required: (as defined by the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2022, *Guidelines for complaint management in organisations*).

Responsible Officers

- Chief Executive Officer
- Volunteer & Client Services Coordinator
- Principal Solicitor
- Mediation Coordinator
- Branch Coordinator

PROCEDURE

Complainants have right to:

- Be heard on the assurance that there will be no retribution for providing feedback
- Know whether CABWA's relevant service procedures have been followed
- Be informed of the criteria, processes and likely time required to deal with the complaint
- Be informed of CABWA's decision and the reasons for that decision
- Know that a genuine, thorough and unbiased examination of the complaint has been undertaken
- Confidentiality, if requested

Complaints can be made to:

Postal and Street Address:

Chief Executive Officer
Citizens Advice Bureau
Level 1, 25 Barrack Street
Perth WA 6000

Phone: 9221 5711

Email: volcoordinator@cabwa.com.au

CABWA Website: Contact Form on our Contact Us page.

CABWA will provide enough resources within their area of control to ensure the efficient and effective management of customer complaints

- Wherever possible, staff should diffuse and de-escalate client dissatisfaction. If this cannot be resolved at first point of contact, volunteers should inform clients of the complaint process
- Clients will be requested to write a complaint and asked to clearly set out all the facts relevant to their complaint to ensure that the issue may be managed appropriately.
- If there is a barrier to undertaking this task a volunteer can take the details and send it to the client to ensure this is what the client would like to relay

The Responsible Officer shall:

- Obtain sufficient detail about the complaint to enable a proper assessment/review and response to the complaint
- Advise the complainant, the time required to provide information to resolve the complaint
- Record complaint details, timing and the form of response where required for reporting purposes
- Ensure staff/volunteers are trained in general and branch-specific complaint handling skills
- Ensure a no-blame culture exists
- Ensure all complaints are dealt with in an acceptable and prompt manner
- Maintain an appropriate recording mechanism for complaints (in accordance with this Policy)

Complaint Processes

All complaints should be addressed to the relevant Responsible Officers or the CEO and can be made in one of the following formats:

- Letter

- Electronically online, emailing CABWA through the *Contact Form* on the *Contact Us* web page
- Verbally taken over the phone with full details

Complainants may address their complaints to the Chief Executive Officer if they prefer and if it is more suitable.

If complaints are addressed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the CEO may refer the complaint to a relevant officer.

The Relevant Officer will acknowledge the complaint within five working days from receipt and have it resolved within 20 working days (where possible).

Where the complaint has not been resolved within 20 working days, the complainant will be advised by telephone or in writing why the delay has occurred, what further action is required and when a result will be provided.

If a complaint is received about a representative of CABWA, then that representative may be requested to assemble sufficient detail about the complaint to enable the Responsible Officer to thoroughly respond to the complaint.

Complaint Outcomes

Responses to complaints may:

- expresses an apology
- any changes in process/es
- improvements initiatives, necessary to prevent further similar complaints
- that it will be dealt with via the internal human resources process.

Complaints may lead to training, warnings, reduced duties or termination of contract for an individual. These measures should not be included in the response due to the confidentiality of the workforce/volunteers.