

This policy exists to provide appropriate procedures to follow should any client of First Intervention have a complaint or appeal that needs to be addressed. First Intervention will work through any complaint/appeal promptly and effectively.

If there is any matter arising from a complaint/appeal that identifies an issue which requires improvement action, the complaint/appeal will be discussed between the General Manager, Compliance Manager and Management Committee at the next management meeting as part of our continuous improvement process. Where a new process is then implemented, it will be recorded in the Continuous Improvement TEAMS channel.

All documentation and/or electronic correspondence/notes collected during the course of any complaint/appeal is saved in a secure database and is able to be accessed by only the General Manager and CEO.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Complaint** - relates to issues of service or advice which has progressed beyond a minor disagreement or beyond simple resolution through good communication skills. These issues need careful and prompt attention so that they do not become damaging to relationships, counter-productive and costly to the organisation. Complaints arise when a person is dissatisfied with an aspect of our services and requires action to be taken to resolve the matter.

**Appeal** - an appeal is a request by the person to reconsider a decision made by First Intervention.



#### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE – INFORMAL**

Most complaints begin in an informal way and are often first brought to the attention of a First Intervention staff member/trainer/assessor who is in direct contact with the complainant.

1. It is the responsibility of the First Intervention staff member/trainer/assessor to whom the complaint/appeal is raised, to use their discretion to address the complainant's concern immediately (within 24 hours). By addressing the complaint/appeal immediately, the issue is less likely to progress to the formal stage.
2. Any staff member/trainer/assessor who receives an informal complaint/appeal is required to document it via an email to the complainant and cc in First Intervention's General Manager.
3. The General Manager will then log the informal complaint in the Complaints & Appeals register.
4. If the complaint is not able to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at the informal stage, the First Intervention staff member/trainer/assessor must advise the complainant that they must formalize their complaint/appeal as per the below procedure.

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**COMPLAINT/APPEAL PROCEDURE – FORMAL**

A formal complaint/appeal must be submitted in writing via email to the attention of the General Manager – either via email to [admin@firstintervention.com.au](mailto:admin@firstintervention.com.au) or via letter which can be mailed to our office or hand delivered.

The complaint/appeal information should include:

- The name of the complainant
- A description of the complaint/appeal
- Any resolution already attempted
- Desired outcome

Upon receipt of the formal complaint/appeal, First Intervention will follow the steps as detailed below.

**Step 1: General Manager**

- The General Manager will contact the complainant within 48 hours to discuss their concerns and find a resolution, the details of which will be recorded on the Complaints & Appeals register.
- Should a successful resolution not be reached, the General Manager will bring the complaint/appeal to the attention of the Management Committee within 24 hours.

**Step 2: Management Committee**

- Within 48 hours of receiving the details from the General Manager, the Management Committee will evaluate the nature of the complaint/appeal and the attempts taken to find a resolution in order to decide upon the most appropriate course of action to proceed toward a resolution for the complainant.
- The General Manager will then contact the complainant to attempt to resolve the complaint/appeal and document the proposed solution and outcome in the Complaints & Appeals register.
- If a successful resolution is unable to be reached, the complainant will be advised in writing by the General Manager that they should refer their complaint to an Independent Adjudicator.

**Step 3: External Appeal**

- Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome as advised by the General Manager, they can refer the matter to an independent mediator at their own expense.
- First Intervention choose to use the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria <https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/> in order to obtain advice and assistance with dispute resolution.
- The complainant may choose a different provider of dispute resolution services.
- Each party shall be provided with written notice of the independent mediator's decision, including reasons for the decision.
- The General Manager will discuss the outcome of the external appeal at the next management meeting and document the outcome in the Complaints & Appeals register.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome they may escalate their complaint/appeal to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) – phone 1300 701 801 or go to <https://asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/>