

## Purpose

This policy documents the *Organisation's* approach in responding to *feedback* and *complaints*.

## Policy statement

### General

1. The *Organisation* will ensure access to policies. The definitions at the end of this policy must be read to support understanding. Where definitions are required, the word/s will be in *italics*.
2. *Feedback* and *complaints*, are an asset to the *Organisation*, providing opportunity to improve the products and services. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reviews all *feedback* and *complaints* and may intervene at any time.
3. The *Organisation* will;
  - a. consider all *feedback* (positive and negative) as part of its quality management system;
  - b. investigate *complaints* in a fair, respectful and timely manner;
  - c. determine how *feedback* and *complaints* are managed and communicated to stakeholders;
  - d. maintain confidentiality (wherever possible) and treat all parties to a *complaint* with respect; and
  - e. not disadvantage or penalise a *complainant* for making a *complaint*.
4. Any *serious incidents* or *complaints* must be immediately brought to the attention of the CEO and Executive Directors (EDs).

### Unavailability of a responsible position

5. When a position responsible for an action in this policy is not available, the responsibility will automatically go to their line manager.

### Managing feedback

6. *Feedback* can be provided at any time; verbally, in writing, using the postcards and 'mailboxes' provided at services, on the One Tree and One Tree Defence Childcare Unit (DCU) websites or by email to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au). The **QM-FOR-013 Feedback and Complaints Flyer** will be displayed at services to inform staff and families of how to provide feedback and complaints.

7. The *Organisation* classifies *feedback* as information coming from *stakeholders* about the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they feel with a product or a service.
8. *Positive feedback* will be logged on the **QM-FOR-030 Feedback and Complaints Log** and shared with staff.
9. If *negative feedback* is verbal and related to day to day matters at service or business level, the person receiving the *feedback* is required to respond directly (wherever possible) to resolve the matter. Day to day matters are to be discussed at the next staff or self-managed team meeting and included in the service's QIP (as necessary).
10. If the same (or similar) *feedback* occurs three times at service level the *feedback* is to be documented on **QM-FOR-011 Operational Issues Feedback Form** and forwarded to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au).
11. *Stakeholders* providing *feedback* are to be listened to respectfully.
12. Wherever possible, before submitting *negative feedback* to customer service the person with the concern is to attempt to address the matter with the staff member, service or *self-managed team*. If the matter is not resolved, or reoccurs, submit feedback on **QM-FOR-011 Operational Issues Feedback Form** and forwarded to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au).
13. Anyone providing *negative feedback* will be:
  - a. asked if they would like to make a formal *complaint* rather than provide general *feedback*;
  - b. offered a copy of this policy;
  - c. advised their *feedback* will inform quality improvement; and
  - d. informed they will not be provided with the outcome unless they request it in writing.
14. *Negative feedback* will be logged on the Log and forwarded to the ED to be discussed with the relevant line manager.
15. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the *negative feedback* has been:
  - a. addressed appropriately with the staff member or *self-managed team* concerned;
  - b. communicated to the staff member or *self-managed team* that if negative feedback continues to be received three times an investigation and/or performance management may result;
  - c. determined (and is satisfied) the issue will not reoccur; and
  - d. communicated to the ED and the Executive Assistant (EA) accordingly via email.
16. The person providing the negative feedback will be advised by email of the outcome either by the EA or the ED if requested in writing in accordance with clause 13d.
17. When there are three or more occasions of similar *negative feedback* in a service or *self-managed team* the CEO may request a *formal investigation*, which could lead to performance

management. The matter will be treated as a complaint. The CEO can choose to become personally involved.

18. At the CEO's sole discretion, a formal investigation may take place when:
- repeat *negative feedback* is received about a *self-managed team, service* or staff member on three or more occasions; or
  - the *negative feedback* is deemed concerning.

### Complaints

19. Although 'common sense' applies, a *complaint* would be deemed to put the *Organisation* or its *stakeholders* at risk. A *complaint* generally must be in writing and deemed serious enough to warrant immediate action. See clause 21.
20. If a *complaint* is made of a less serious nature, whenever appropriate, *complainants* will be encouraged to resolve the matter (directly) with the *parties* involved before escalating to a *formal investigation*. In this instance *complainants* will also be given the option to provide *feedback* rather than lodge a formal *complaint*.
21. If a matter (referred to in clause 19) is not able to be resolved to the satisfaction of the *complainant*, the *complainant* will be provided information on lodging a formal *complaint* to be investigated in line with this policy. Complainants will need to complete **QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report**. If for any reason the complainant cannot complete the form the EA or person hearing the complaint will complete the form on their behalf. If necessary, the complainant will be interviewed, the interview recorded and transcribed.
22. *Complaints* will be forwarded to the relevant ED for investigation. The ED will coordinate the investigation and report the findings to the EA. The **QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report** will be completed by the EA and ED.
23. Unless otherwise documented in a contract or agreement, all *complaint* investigations will be concluded in 10 working days and feedback within 28 working days.
24. *Complainants* will be contacted at the beginning and end of the process (including being provided with the outcome of their *complaint*).
25. *Complainants* satisfaction will be recorded on the **Log**.
26. *Complainants* who believe their *complaint* has not been responded to fairly can request it is reviewed by the CEO and then the Board of Directors (Board). The Board will review the *complaint* and associated investigation and make the final decision.

## Monitoring feedback and complaints

27. *Feedback and complaints* (that were unable to be resolved in the first instance as per clauses 12 and 19) will be emailed (or provided) to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au) for recording into the **Log** along with all associated documentation to be filed in the central filing system.
28. The EA will prepare a summary of the feedback and complaints on the **Log** and status to discuss with the CEO.
29. The CEO will review the **Log** at least fortnightly (preferably weekly) and determine if any further action is required and decide on whether complaints can be closed.

## The role of the Quality Management Team and the Board of Directors

30. The role of the Quality Management Team (QMT) and the Board of Directors (Board) is to monitor trends associated with feedback or complaints and to implement actions as deemed appropriate.
31. The QMT will also review summary reports bi-annually of any staff or customer surveys (including staff exit surveys) to identify trends as a part of the standing agenda and include on the risk management register as required.
32. The Board will be provided with a report identifying trends related to feedback and complaints in scheduled Board reports.

## Communication

33. Information on providing feedback or making a complaint will be made available on the *Organisation's* websites, social media platforms and in printed form via newsletters, posters and postcards and will be displayed at all physical service locations.
34. Other mechanisms for providing feedback will include (at a minimum) an annual customer and staff survey.
35. Regional Managers (RMs) are required to collect postcards and any other *feedback* from services and forward to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au) at least bi-annually.

## Parent, staff (or customer) satisfaction surveys

36. *Feedback* from parent, staff (or customer) satisfaction surveys are to be collated and a summary emailed to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au). The summary is to be presented to the QMT bi-annually and filed by the EA in the central filing system.
37. *Feedback* received by parents to support the curriculum is not deemed a part of this policy.

## Staff grievance

38. A *grievance* is any type of problem, concern or complaint related to an employee's work including interactions with other employees. Refer to **HR-POL-016 Staff Grievance NQS Policy**.
39. Unresolved staff grievances are to be emailed to [hr@onetree.org.au](mailto:hr@onetree.org.au)

## Serious matters and matters reportable by law

40. Anyone becoming aware of a serious matter must immediately telephone the EA. Serious matters include:
- the safety, health or wellbeing of a child has been compromised;
  - a law (regulation) has been breached;
  - the Organisation's reputation is likely to be impacted; or
  - unacceptable conduct or serious misconduct has occurred (see **HR-POL-002 Managing Poor Performance and Unacceptable Conduct Policy**).
41. The EA will immediately report *serious matters* to the CEO on the day it is received. The CEO will direct the response. The CEO may assign an ED or respond. If the CEO is not available, the matter is to be referred directly to an ED.
42. *Serious matters* that are reportable by law (regulations) must be reported to the relevant state or territory regulatory authority within 24 hours by a general manager or above.
43. Written responses to *complainants* or to funding bodies must be reviewed by the CEO or an ED before being sent. This includes those involving unacceptable conduct or serious misconduct.

## One Tree Defence Childcare Unit (OTDCU)

44. *Feedback* and *complaints* relating to OTDCU will be managed in accordance with this policy and any additional requirements specified in the Defence Childcare Program Services (DCP) contract and statement of work section 9.5 Annex 3. This includes *feedback* and *complaints* that the Commonwealth Representative receives directly.
45. The Commonwealth Representative will be notified of any *OTDCU notifiable matter* and or serious complaints within 24 hours by a general manager or above assigned the task by the ED. All other *feedback* will be presented at scheduled meetings in accordance with the DCP contract.

## Reporting requirements

In accordance with **QM-FOR-014 Organisational Chart and Reporting Requirements**.

## Legislation compliance

Refer to QM-SS-001 **Regulations and Legislation Register Spreadsheet**.

## Implementation

The *Organisation* will:

- ensure there are a range of *feedback* mechanisms available to *Stakeholders*; and
- use feedback and *complaints* to continuously improve performance and manage risks.

*Staff* will:

- work in accordance with this policy;
- attempt to resolve negative feedback or minor complaints with the person concerned before sending it through to customer service (whenever possible);
- send all unresolved negative feedback and complaints to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au); if not resolved immediately with the person concerned;
- seek advice from the EA if in doubt of the process;
- advise *complainants* of their options to provide *feedback* or make a *complaint* (and what both options involve);
- deescalate *complaints* or negative *feedback* by actively listening;
- advise the *complainant* that the matter will be forwarded to the CEO's EA;
- advise those making a *complaint* they will be contacted in one working day;
- copy furnish (i.e. cc) the ED and the EA into any *complaints* sent to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au);

The CEO will:

- ensure feedback and complaints are responded to in accordance with this policy and intervene as required;
- review written responses before being sent;
- delegate responsibility for responding to feedback and complaints; and
- review the **Log** at least fortnightly but preferably weekly to remain informed of negative *feedback* and *complaints*.

The quality management team will:

- review a summary of the Log bi-annually to identify issues that could be a potential risk to the Organisation and to improve products and services;
- include matters on the risk register or quality management team QIP (as required); and

- action matters as required.

The executive directors will:

- work in accordance with this policy;
- ensure the EA is provided all feedback and complaints;
- be responsible for being the first point of contact for complainants when assigned by the EA or the CEO;
- deescalate matters wherever possible;
- ensure matters that are reportable by law (regulations) are reported to the relevant state or territory regulatory authority within 24 hours by a general manager of above;
- be responsible for investigations related to this policy (including delegating to the appropriate personnel);
- ensure legal advice has been sought (i.e. CCI or Fair Work) when necessary;
- review (and edit) written responses before providing to the CEO;
- complete the appropriate sections in QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report and provide to the EA in accordance with the timeline for complaints;
- provide a summary of any staff or customer surveys to the quality management team bi-annually;
- provide a summary of the outcome of investigations to be copied into the Log by the EA;
- ensure complaints are finalised within 10 working days and feedback within 28 working days; and
- ensure reports are provided to the EA in a timely manner.

Human resources will:

- provide a summary of staff exit surveys to the quality management team bi-annually;
- keep a log of all grievances and performance; and
- provide a summary of the log to the EA as requested (bi-annually).

The EA will:

- oversee and coordinate the feedback and complaint process;
- contact the complainant upon receipt of their feedback or complaint;
- ask *complainants*:
  - if they have attempted to resolve the matter (encourage them to do so as a first action);
  - if they wish to make a formal *complaint* or to provide *feedback* (advise them of the requirements),
  - of their expectations in terms of an outcome, and



Policy name	Feedback and Complaints Policy
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Responsible S-MT	Quality Management

- if they would like a copy of this policy.
- advise the complainant of the process and timeline;
- complete the appropriate sections in QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report and provide to the ED in accordance with the timeline for complaints;
- oversee the feedback and complaints process ensuring reports are provided in accordance with this policy;
- check for any surveys (customer or staff including staff exit surveys) and request they be summarised for presentation to the quality management team bi-annually;
- check [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au) for any feedback or complaints daily;
- advise the CEO and EDs of feedback or complaint in accordance with this policy;
- advise the ED to contact the person making a complaint within one working day;
- update the Log (at least weekly);
- send a completed QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report to the ED;
- ensure the feedback and complaints are documented to the Log to provide bi-annually to the quality management team meetings;
- summarise feedback and complaints to present to the CEO;
- schedule a meeting with the CEO weekly to present feedback and complaints received, review progress and outcomes of feedback and complaints; and
- report to the CEO any non-compliance to timelines and reporting requirements.

Directors and managers (or other staff) will:

- ensure general (i.e. non-serious) *feedback* at service level is included in the QIP and is actioned to support continuous improvement; and
- email any feedback (negative or positive) received to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au) and cc the ED.

Regional managers will:

- ensure they collect any *feedback* received at services and email to [customerservice@onetree.org.au](mailto:customerservice@onetree.org.au) at least bi-annually (or as directed).

OTDCU executive director will:

- work in accordance with this policy;
- pass on feedback and complaints in accordance with this policy;
- ensure that all OTDCU minor matters are dealt with in accordance with this policy and 100% resolved;
- inform the Commonwealth Representative on any OTDCU minor matters received at the next contract compliance meeting;



<b>Policy name</b>	Feedback and Complaints Policy
<b>Policy number</b>	QM-POL-002
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<b>Responsible S-MT</b>	Quality Management

- ensure that all OTDCU major matters are reported to the Commonwealth Representative within 24 hours and dealt with in accordance with this policy;
- report the outcomes of any investigations to the Commonwealth Representative within 10 working days after receiving a major complaint;
- ensure that all OTDCU major matters are resolved within one month of receipt of the matter; and
- notify the Commonwealth Representative in writing on the resolution of any OTDCU major matter raised within one month of receipt of the complaint.

The Commonwealth Representative will:

- forward all feedback and *complaints* received relating to any OTDCU service directly to the OTDCU executive director.

### Related policies, forms and checklists

HR-POL-002 Managing Poor Performance and Unacceptable Conduct Policy

HR-POL-016 Staff Grievance NQS Policy

QM-FOR-030 Feedback and Complaints Form (Log)

QM-FOR-011 Operational Issues Feedback Form

QM-FOR-013 Feedback and Complaints Flyer complete

QM-REP-001 Complaint Details and Investigation Report

### Definitions

**Commonwealth Representative:** refers to the authorised delegate that is responsible for the administering the DCP contract on behalf of the Commonwealth.

**Complainant:** anyone making a *complaint* or providing negative *feedback*.

*Complaints:* Can be informal and formal.

**Feedback:** Information coming directly from Stakeholders about the satisfaction or dissatisfaction they feel with a product or a service. The person providing the feedback is not wanting to make a *complaint* but wanting the Organisation to be aware of areas requiring improvement or acknowledging good practice.

**Complaint:** Must be in writing and deemed serious enough to warrant immediate action.

Although 'common sense' applies, a *complaint* would be deemed to put the Organisation or its Stakeholders at risk (i.e. non-compliance to policy, regulations or legislation or a matter that is significantly impacting on the service or its stakeholders).

**Minor, day to day matters:** is *feedback* that can be responded to and resolved immediately by the person receiving the *feedback* to the immediate satisfaction of the Stakeholder. It does not reoccur.

**Organisation:** One Tree Community Services Inc.

**OTDCU major matter:** refers to any incident that has or is likely to place the service in breach of any regulation or law as defined by the Early Education and Care Regulations and National Law.

**OTDCU minor matter (or serious matter):** refers to any incident that is not classified as above.

**OTDCU notifiable matter (or serious matter):** refers to the death or serious injury or illness of a person, or an incident that exposes a person to a risk or serious injury or illness.

**QIP:** Quality Improvement Plan

**Stakeholders:** Any person or group of people having an involvement with the Organisation to include customers, parents, carers, staff, volunteers, business partners, duty holders, funding or sponsoring bodies, government or the general community.

**Self-Managed Teams:** represent business areas within the Organisation. These include finance, fees and enrolments, corporate services (IT and admin), marketing and communications, human resources, services and quality management.

## Version History

Version (ISOC only)	Submitted by	Change Date	Approver	Approval Date	Description
1.0	Karri Hillier				First release version
2.0	Karri Hillier	24/06/2019	QMT/ Karri Hillier	26/06/2019	New template
3.0	Lyn Levy/ Karri Hillier	21/04/2020	Pathfinders/ Karri Hillier	23/04/2020	Removed organisational health check. Complaints will be formally investigated (although all are encouraged to address it at their level); negative feedback will be addressed by line manager unless directed by CEO. Surveys will be gathered and reported and EDs will report on outcomes of investigations. Updates to related documents.