

## 1. Purpose

Berry Street is committed to maintaining a systemic approach to feedback and complaints to ensure the voices of young people, their families, carers or guardians, staff, and the broader community are heard, taken seriously and responded to.

We recognise the importance of maintaining feedback and complaint processes which inform Berry Street's continuous quality improvement. Feedback and complaints provide Berry Street with a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

## 2. Commitment to Child Safety

Berry Street is committed to being a child safe, child friendly and child empowering organisation. In everything we do we seek to positively protect children; we listen and respond if harm or abuse occurs and remain open, honest and transparent about any failings. Berry Street works with groups of children and young people who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Berry Street pays particular attention to:

- The safety of children in out of home care
- The cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- The cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- The safety of children with a disability
- The safety of children who are LGBTQIA+

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all types of feedback, complaints and concerns provided to Berry Street.

This policy applies to all staff, carers, volunteers, members of the public, families and service users.

This policy does not cover surveys or research.

## 4. Review Cycle

The Feedback and Complaints policy will be reviewed every three years in line with the Plan Do Check Act cycle, and as outlined in the Policy Framework.

## 5. Definitions

### Complaints:

Formal expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Berry Street. Complaints require a response or resolution, either because one is explicitly or implicitly requested, or because it is legally required.

### Feedback:

Advice, criticism, compliments or information about Berry Street and/or our services shared for the purpose of improvement. All feedback is valuable to Berry Street.

## 6. Policy

### 6.1 General

Berry Street is committed to maintaining a system of feedback and complaints which is accessible, supportive, and a responsive pathway for all stakeholders to lodge complaints, provide feedback and receive a response, without fear of retribution.

All forms of feedback and complaints are valued and can inform Berry Street's service improvements. Berry Street will accept feedback in any practical format it is communicated to us. Berry Street will have an accessible feedback and complaints system, with multiple mechanisms for feedback such through the website, email, phone, verbal discussions with staff members, and by paper form.

Berry Street ensures that all feedback and complaint processes are culturally safe and accessible for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, for people from multifaith and multicultural communities and those who are LGBTIQ+. We ensure feedback and complaint processes are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, with specific attention to accessibility needs of those who speak languages other than English or are vision-impaired or neuro-diverse. Information about feedback and complaints will be provided in multiple languages, mediums, and in Plain English versions.

Complaints will be handled according to the principles of procedural fairness, which means we have an obligation to ensure the complaint is handled without bias or conflicts of interest.

### 6.1 Complaints Management

The process for managing any complaint consists of:



**Acknowledgement:**

- Service-related complaints from service users, children, young people or the public must be acknowledged within 5 business days and resolved within 28 business days.
- Staff receiving the initial complaint should attempt to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact.
- The staff receiving the complaint must keep records in line with the relevant policy or procedure (listed in section 6.2).

**Assessment:**

- Investigate or review the complaint and consider how to resolve.

**Resolution:**

- Advise the complainant of the planned resolution, this allows time and additional opportunity for the complainant to clarify or add to the complaint and the proposed resolution.

**Review:**

- The complainant has the right to appeal a decision or resolution and ask for a review of their complaint.

**6.2 Avenues for Specific Types of Complaints**

Numerous internal and external requirements exist that dictate the process for specific types of complaints. These processes exist to ensure serious or high-risk complaints are responded to consistently and that appropriate authorities are notified as required. Formal processes are available for all types of complaints and in general are separated for internal or external use.

Where complaints relate to multiple processes, the relevant teams will work together to coordinate an appropriate response. For complaints related to the following areas, refer to the associated procedures and/or processes:

**6.2.1 Complaints Processes for Service Users, Students, Volunteers and the Public**

<b>Type of Complaint</b>	<b>Related Policy or Procedure</b>
<b>Past Abuse</b> - Instances where persons 18 years and over, who were previously in the care of Berry Street and or participated in one of its services (and any of its founding agencies since 1877) experienced abuse or neglect while in our care or through accessing our services.	<a href="#">Complaints from past care leavers   Berry Street</a>
<b>Privacy</b> – a complaint regarding Berry Street’s collection, handling, disclosure, storage and or disposal of personal information.	<a href="#">Privacy   Berry Street</a>
<b>School</b> – complaints regarding the Berry Street School	<a href="#">Berry-Street-School-Feedback-and-Complaints-</a>

	<a href="#">Policy.pdf (berrystreet.org.au)</a>
<b>Service delivery related complaints</b> - complaints made about Berry Street's services.	<a href="#">Current client feedback and complaints form   Berry Street</a>

### 6.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

All feedback and complaints must be handled in line with the [Berry Street Privacy Framework](#) unless otherwise described within the relevant policy e.g. Whistleblower complaints are anonymous and managed through a third party.

People making complaints are under no obligation to keep their complaint secret or confidential and Berry Street acknowledges the complainant may disclose their complaint to other parties and external bodies at any time.

Feedback and complaints will be de-identified for analysis, reporting and when used to inform quality improvement.

### 6.5 Quality Improvements from Complaints and Feedback

Berry Street will maintain an organisation-wide system for actively collecting, tracking, responding to, reporting and evaluating feedback, including analysing and making available aggregate feedback data and using feedback to inform continuous quality improvement.

### 6.6 Staff training

Berry Street will cultivate an organisational culture which encourages feedback and complaints through leadership and learning opportunities.

Relevant staff will be supported to implement the practices outlined in this policy through targeted learning opportunities, resources, and or training. This specifically includes conflict resolution, complaints management, and identifying complaints.

Relevant staff include:

- HR Business Partners
- Executive Directors
- Directors/Principal
- Administration Staff
- Quality and Risk Staff
- Child Safe Officers
- Service Managers
- Service staff

## 7. Supporting Documents and References

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse).

## 8. Version control

Version Number	2
Approved by:	Quality Governance Committee and CEO
Approved date:	14/04/2023
Review date:	14/04/2026
Process Owner:	Senior Manager Quality – Katrina Stone
Executive Responsible:	CEO – Michael Perusco
Version notes:	
Version 1.0	Policy created 20/02/2020
Version 1.1	Policy updated 8/01/2020 with information relating to Victims of crime charter requirements
Version 2.0	Language updated for clarity and brevity. Links added for different types of complaint processes.