



External Complaints Policy

Policy

Shelter WA's complaints policy is based on the principles of respect, fairness, equity, accountability, confidentiality, transparency and responsiveness.

People making complaints will be:

- Provided with information on the Shelter WA complaint handling procedure
- Listened to and treated with respect by Shelter WA
- Ensured that the complaint will be addressed in a confidential, prompt, fair, and transparent way.
- Provided with the outcome of decisions made in relation to the complaint and options for redress and review.

Shelter WA will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood. If a person prefers or needs another person or organization to assist or represent them in the making of or resolution of their complaint, Shelter WA will communicate with them through their representative if required.

Shelter WA will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them.

Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and parties to the complaint will be kept informed of progress of the complaint. Shelter WA procedures will reflect the principles of natural justice. To ensure continuous improvement, feedback will be considered in Shelter WA reviews and follow up.

Complaints Handling Procedure

Shelter WA staff and volunteers are provided information about the complaints policy and procedure as part of their induction. The Shelter WA Complaints Procedure outlines:

- How to make a complaint to Shelter WA
- Who to complain to
- How Shelter WA will deal with the complaint – complaints process and timelines
- How to make a complaint to an external body including contact details.

Complaints Initiation Process

- Any person providing a verbal complaint will be directed to complete the required form.
- All complaints **must** be lodged on the Complaints/Feedback Form available by request or downloadable from the Shelter WA website, which is automatically e-mailed to the Chief Executive Officer when the *submit* button is clicked.
- Alternatively, written complaints may be mailed to ceo@shelterwa.org.au, or posted and marked “Confidential”.
- If the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint should be directed to the Chairperson of Shelter WA’s Board of Management, C/- Shelter WA, 33 Moore Street, East Perth 6004 and marked “Confidential”.

Shelter WA Complaints Process

Stage One - Receipt of the Complaint

Upon receipt of the complaint, Shelter WA will log the complaint. The record of complaint will include:

- The contact information of the person making the complaint and the data received
- Issues raised by the persons making the complaint and the outcome they seek
- Other relevant information
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires

Stage Two – Acknowledge

Shelter WA will acknowledge receipt of the complaint promptly and directly to the complainant within five working days.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (ie letter, email) for communicating with the complainant and Shelter WA will be guided by the complainant’s preferred method of contact.

Stage Three – Assess and investigate

Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, Shelter WA will confirm whether the matter raised in the complaint are within Shelter WA’s control to resolve. Shelter WA will consider the outcome sought the by person making the complaint and where there is more than one issue raised, determine

whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, Shelter WA will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of another organization.

Shelter WA will consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints or feedback.

Shelter WA will ensure that the person who may be subject of the complaint is not involved in the investigation of that complaint and will ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

Investigating the complaint

Shelter WA will undertake a preliminary investigation of the complaint within ten days of receipt of the complaint.

After assessing the complaint, Shelter WA will consider how to manage it and may:

- Give the person managing the complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue the complaint is about
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint

Shelter WA will keep the person making the complaint up to date on progress, particularly if there are any delays. Shelter WA will communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium, which actions Shelter WA decide to take will be tailored to the case and consider any statutory requirements.

The person who has made the complaint may be contacted for more information.

Stage Four – Determine outcome and provide reason for decision.

Following consideration of the complaint and investigation into the issues raised, Shelter WA will contact the person making the complaint and advise them of:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action taken
- The reason/s for the decision
- The remedy or resolutions that Shelter WA has proposed to put in place
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant such as internal review, external review or appeal.

Written communication will be sent to the person within 14 days of receipt of the complaint, to explain what action is being taken and resolve the complaint.

If the complaint has not been resolved by this stage the person will be kept informed and an anticipated outcome date will be provided.

Shelter WA aims to investigate and resolve all complaints within a maximum of 28 days from receipt of a written complaint.

If this time frame cannot be met, the person will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution.

Complainants will also be notified that they can make a complaint to an external body, if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, and contact details provided.

Stage Five – close the complaint

Shelter WA will keep records about:

- How the complaint was managed
- The outcomes of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decision made on those recommendations)
- Analyze and report outcomes to the Board.

Documentation

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Responsible Person	Approval
3 years	Chief Executive Officer	Board

Policy Review and Tracking Version			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Data
May 2013	June 2013	Executive Officer	2016
December 2018			