

COMPLAINTS POLICY



INTRODUCTION

The right of a client or stakeholder to lodge a complaint about a service is a fundamental right and clients are entitled have complaints investigated objectively and without fear of retribution.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the procedure used for complaints submitted to the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), and
- offer a process by which complaints can be addressed when immediate resolution cannot be reached.

PRINCIPLES

- Complaints will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No prior judgments or assumptions will be made. No action will be taken until the investigation is complete.
- Complaints will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the Complainant, and the Director or designated QPASTT worker directly involved in investigating and resolving the complaint. Where the complaint is escalated, this may also include other employees of QPASTT who are required to provide information around the complaint.
- The Complainant shall not be subjected to any prejudicial consequences as a result of making a compliant.
- There is an underlying assumption that complaints are made in good faith (and with good will), with an intention for resolution, and not made in a vexatious or malicious manner.
- Complainants will be advised of the receipt of their complaint within two weeks of receiving it. Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period of time as possible
- Where the complaint involves serious misconduct or a criminal offence, QPASTT has an obligation to deal with the matter urgently and to refer the matter to the Police or other agency for investigation e.g. WorkCover. Where the matter relates to a particular staff member and depending on the seriousness of the offence, immediate termination or leave without pay while the matter is investigated may be options considered. These decisions will be at the discretion of the Director.

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PROCESS

- Where a Complainant is unhappy with any part of QPASTT's service, they are advised to first contact their Counsellor if the complaint is about a counselling matter, or to another QPASTT staff member for more general issues. This can be done face to face, over the phone, by email or letter.
- In situations where identified concerns remain unresolved, the Complainant is advised to make a complaint to the Director of QPASTT. This can be done in person, by phone, by letter, by email, by fax or by completing the Complaint Form on the QPASTT website. The Complainant is asked to advise, where possible, what kind of result or outcome it is hoped will be achieved, however this will not necessarily dictate the remedy that might ultimately apply.
- Where contact details have been provided, QPASTT will notify the Complainant on receiving the complaint. This will occur within 2 weeks.
- The Director may deal with the complaint personally or refer the complaint to another appropriate person - for example, a QPASTT worker or a member or members of the Management Committee.
- The person designated to handle the complaint will record the complaint on the Complaints Register and if necessary contact the Complainant to seek relevant supporting documentation or further details and clarification regarding, for example, the chronological flow of events. All details provided will be kept confidential.
It may also be necessary to contact others in order to progress the investigation into the complaint. For example, where a complaint involves the conduct of a QPASTT employee, the matter will be raised with the employee concerned and comment and input sought in the resolution of the complaint. QPASTT expects, however, that all employees privy to the details to a complaint will keep this information confidential.
- QPASTT will carefully consider the complaint and endeavour to make a determination based on all the information available within 28 working days. In situations where this is not possible, the Complainant will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint.
- The Complainant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible.
- The determination and actions will then be recorded onto the Complaints Register by the person designated to handle the complaint.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

1. The complaint is substantiated

The Complainant will be informed of this result, and QPASTT will then take appropriate agreed steps to resolve the complaint, address concerns and prevent the problem from recurring. The following are among the possible outcomes:

- An agreement between the parties;

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- A verbal or written apology;
- Change in process or action taken;

The Director will ensure that the outcome is implemented and documented.

2. The complaint is unsubstantiated

Where this policy has been followed, but a complaint is not substantiated, the Complainant will be informed of the decision.

3. The Complainant is not satisfied with QPASTT's determination

At the conclusion of the investigation into the complaint, if the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they are invited to take the complaint to the relevant Funding Department.

Contact details for relevant Funding Bodies are available at QPASTT Reception, or from individual QPASTT staff.

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

QPASTT will accept anonymous complaints, however it is up to the discretion of the Director or President to determine further action. In all cases, anonymous complaints and actions taken will be recorded on the Complaints Register.

FEEDBACK

QPASTT has an active process of collecting and recording feedback. This feedback may at times be negative and may be treated as a complaint.

CONTACT PERSON

Director

QPASTT

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