LIFELINE NORTHERN BEACHES, MOSMAN TO KIRRIBILLI

FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Approved by Board	31 October 2025
Next review date	31 October 2027
Version	1.1 (18.06.2026)
Responsibility	CEO
Application	All staff & volunteers (**Workplace Participants**)
THIS POLICY ACTIVE FROM:	**1 November 2025**

Lifeline
NORTHERN BEACHES,
MOSMAN TO KIRRIBILLI

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1. About this Policy

Lifeline Northern Beaches Limited (ABN 205 250 079 849), trading as Lifeline Northern Beach es, Mosman to Kirribilli (**LLNBM2K**) recognizes the importance of an effective complaint handling process in providing consistently high quality, trauma-informed, and person-centred services and operations.

Feedback and complaints provide valuable information and give us opportunities to learn and improve, supporting accountability and continuous improvement across all LLNBM2K services and operations. We are committed to reflecting on feedback and handling complaints from external stakeholders in a fair, responsive, respectful, and safe manner.

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all Workplace Participants receiving or handling feedback or complaints regarding our services, systems, practices, procedures, operations, staff and volunteers, and our handling of complaints, that are received from external stakeholders, including clients of LLNBM2K services, members of the general public, donors and funding partners, community organisations and collaborators.

It does not replace internal grievance procedures for Workplace Participants.

3. Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction made to us or about us, our services, our operations, our staff and volunteers, or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or required.

Feedback: Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, about our services, operations, or complaint handling process, where a response or resolution is not explicitly or implicitly expected or required.

Complainant: The person or entity making the complaint.

Workplace Participants include LLNBM2K staff, volunteers, volunteer applicants (including Crisis Support students), contractors and suppliers. This includes, but is not limited to, officers, staff (paid), volunteers, consultants, contractors, sub-contractors, an employee of a contractor or sub-contractor, an employee of a labour hire company, an apprentice or trainee, a student gaining work experience or completing community service or Duke of Edinburgh requirements, and employees of external organisations engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility activities at a LLNBM2K site. It specifically includes individual Board members.

4. Guiding Principles

Our feedback & complaint handling process is modelled on the following principles:

Accessibility: Complaints can be made easily via multiple channels.

Responsiveness: Complaints are acknowledged and resolved in as timely a manner as possible.

Fairness: Complaints are handled impartially, respectfully, and consistently.

Accountability: Clear roles and responsibilities are defined for complaint handling.

5. Policy Statement

LLNBM2K welcomes feedback and complaints about our services and operations. We are committed to reflecting on feedback and handling complaints from external stakeholders in a fair, responsive, and safe manner. We will be helpful, respectful and culturally aware in how we respond.

Our feedback and complaint handling process provides valuable information and gives us opportunities to learn and improve, supporting accountability and continuous improvement. It is modelled on the principles of accessibility, responsiveness, fairness, and accountability and is integrated into our organizational culture.

This enables us to:

- deliver support services to those in need;
- deliver counselling services and programs;
- deliver commercial operations, philanthropic and fundraising activities and events that support our services and programs;
- retain the confidence and trust of those who use our services and access our programs; and
- meet legal / regulatory and government funding obligations.

We commit to:

- providing opportunities for external stakeholders to provide feedback, for example through evaluations, surveys, and newsletters.
- ensuring a culture that respects people's right to make a complaint about any aspect of our services or operations;
- ensuring those who provide feedback or make complaints are heard and treated with empathy, discretion, dignity and respect, and protected from retaliation;
- assisting people to provide feedback or make a complaint, especially vulnerable individuals, and allowing those lodging complaints to have a support person involved in the complaint handling process;
- encouraging staff and volunteers to be alert to feedback and complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly;
- supporting staff and volunteers to feel comfortable handling complaints at the first point of contact or assisting in escalation of complaints;
- addressing each complaint with integrity and in an equitable and objective manner;
- developing resolutions that are clear, fair, proportionate, appropriate and timely;
- using feedback and complaint information to improve service safety, quality, performance, and effectiveness; and
- identifying systemic causes and action learnings from complaint investigations.

We monitor our feedback and complaint handling process to ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints and identifying and correcting deficiencies in how it operates.

This policy statement is accessible to all service users, our staff and volunteers, and our funding partners, and is available for public viewing on the LLNBM2K website.

6. Complaint Handling Process

People offering feedback and/or making complaints will be provided with information about the feedback and complaint handling process:

Receiving Feedback and Complaints: Feedback and complaints may be submitted via email, phone, in-person, or online form. Anonymous complaints are accepted where there is a compelling reason to do so, and a confidential investigation of the issues is carried out where sufficient information has been provided.

Acknowledgment: Complaints are acknowledged within three (3) business days.

Assessment: Complaints are assessed for severity and urgency, identifying the nature and degree of any investigation required. Responsibility for dealing with the complaint is allocated to appropriate staff. **Note**: In cases where the complaint involves the Chief Operating Officer, then the breach or disclosure must be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**). Where the complaint involves the CEO, then it must be reported to the Board Chair and the investigation allocated by the Board Chair to appropriate staff and/or Board Representative.

Timeframes: Clear timeframes are set to investigate and resolve each complaint.

Investigation: Relevant facts are gathered and reviewed. The complainant may be contacted for further information.

Resolution: Outcomes are communicated to the complainant. Remedies may be offered if applicable.

Review: Complainants may request an internal review if they are not satisfied with the outcome. Any requests for review will be considered and a review conducted, other than by the original staff / Board member handling the complaint, where CEO, delegate and/or Board representative deem appropriate.

Early Resolution: Where possible, complaints are resolved at first contact with us.

Privacy: Complainant identity and sensitive information are protected. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by LLNBM2K as permitted under relevant Privacy laws and consistent with LLNBM2K Privacy Policy. Where potentially unlawful conduct has occurred, LLNBM2K may need to notify the appropriate authorities.

Continuous Improvement: Feedback and complaints are used to improve the effectiveness and quality of services and operations.

Reporting: Complaint trends are reported quarterly to the CEO and annually to the Board.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer: Promotes a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution. Reports to the Board on feedback and complaint trends and outcomes.

Chief Operations Officer: Oversees complaint handling and ensures compliance.

Workplace Participants: Responsible for receiving, recording, and escalating feedback and complaints appropriately.

8. Record Keeping

All complaints must be logged into the LLNBM2K Feedback and Complaints Register, including:

- Date received
- Nature of the complaint
- Actions taken
- Resolution status.

9. Continuous Improvement

Feedback and complaint data is reviewed periodically to identify service gaps, training needs, and opportunities to improve systems and processes.

10. Accessibility of Policy

This policy is available publicly on the LLNBM2K website and may be provided in alternative formats upon request.

11. References

- LLNBM2K Complaints Register
- LLNB Code of Conduct
- LLNBM2K Privacy Policy
- LLNB Grievance Policy
- Lifeline Australia Service Complaints Policy Statement
- Volunteering Australia Fact Sheet: Complaint Handling by Charities and Not-For-Profits (2021)
- Checklist for practitioners handling feedback and complaints: Ahpra and Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide: Commonwealth Ombudsman

12. Version Control

Version No.	Description	Effective Date	Reviewer
v1.1	Change of logo, legal entity, title	18.06.2026	HRM
v 1.0	Development of original policy	31/10/2025	COO