

COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

Tier 1: Complaints Handling Charter

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1. Introduction

The Community Services Directorate (CSD / the Directorate/we/us) is committed to effectively handling complaints. Good complaint management means service users, stakeholders and employees can take part in improving the services we provide.

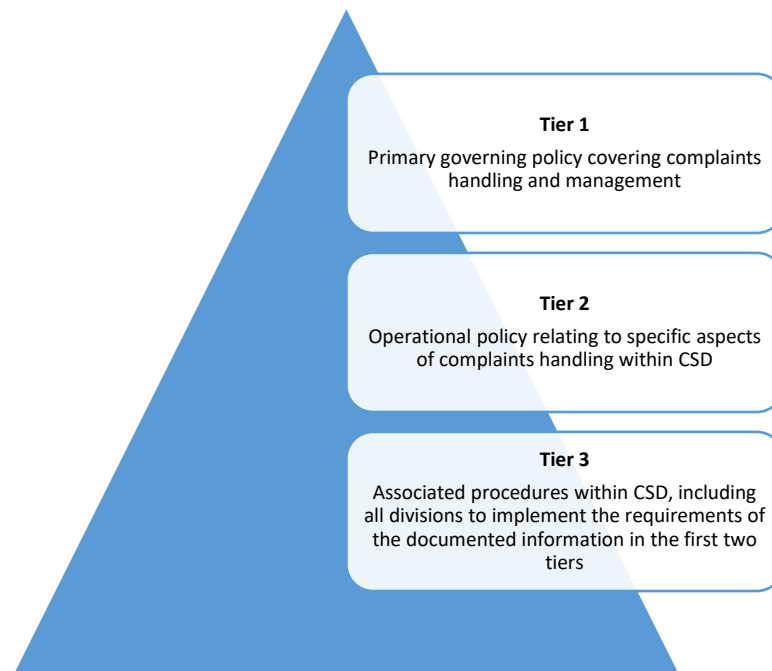
The CSD Complaints Handling and Management Policy (CHaMP) framework makes sure we deal with complaints and decisions fairly, and we learn lessons to lead to improvements in our services.

The CHaMP framework describes how we will receive and respond to complaints throughout the Directorate.

2. The complaints policy suite: How to use the documents

The CHaMP framework is designed to set out how we receive and respond to complaints for transparency and accountability.

The framework is arranged into three (3) tiers:



All policy documents should be read in conjunction one another.

3. What this document is for

This document formally sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility for how we will handle complaints. The Charter gives authority to all Divisions in CSD to handle and manage complaints as set out in the CHaMP suite of documents. The Charter also places responsibility on Regulation, Assurance and Quality (RAQ) for complaints oversight and reporting functions in CSD.

For CSD, the Charter:

- sets clear expectations for all staff in the handling of complaints
- defines the role and responsibilities of all staff
- identifies and implements best practice service delivery

- encourages a culture of quality assurances and continuous improvement; and
- sets out a systematic, disciplined approach to complaints handling to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

For our service users, this Charter:

- ensures internationally and nationally recognised best practice when engaging with our services
- guarantees procedural fairness
- ensures an impartial avenue to have concerns heard
- provides an opportunity to improve CSD policy and practice.

4. Who this charter is for

The Charter applies to all CSD staff, (including those by appointment, secondment, contract, ongoing, casual, temporary assignment, volunteer, trainee or on a fee-for-service basis), and to staff of associated organisations and service providers.

5. Authority of CSD Divisions to manage complaints

Our complaint handling process ensures people are heard and their feedback is used to improve our services for others. The complaints handling process is underpinned by several principles including procedural fairness, and an intention to resolve complaints close to the point of origin, where possible.

When responding to a complaint, all staff at CSD should act within the bounds of:

- the ACT Public Service Values and Signature Behaviours of Respect, Integrity, Collaboration and Innovation.
- CSD's *Complaints Handling and Management Charter*, and the CHaMP policy suite

What this Charter authorises CSD Divisions to do

CSD, through the CHaMP, authorises and expects all Divisions to:

- receive, respond to and resolve complaints as set out in the CHaMP
- develop their own Tier 3 Procedures under the policy for consistency and quality, including procedures for managing certain matters under the policy where this is needed, such as unreasonable conduct
- collaborate across the Directorate on ongoing implementation of the CHaMP, and
- provide feedback to the CSD Executive, through the CSD Complaints Management Committee (CSDCMC) and the responsible body for the oversight of the policy.

Expectations of CSD Divisions

CSD expects all Divisions to ensure staff with direct responsibility for handling complaints will:

- be adequately supported and trained in their role to ensure they develop an in-depth knowledge of operations within their own divisions, as well as more broadly across the Directorate
- have experience and recognised qualifications
- be supported with ongoing professional development

Tier 1

- have access to information required to undertake an impartial inquiry, and to form views based on complete and accurate information
- be encouraged to adopt reflective practice to reduce escalations and for best practice
- have access to what is needed to ensure their ongoing safety, health, wellbeing and security, including current policies, procedures, practices and supporting tools (such as identify protection if required).

This Charter authorises all staff who investigate or review complaints about the services CSD provides to access all:

- functions
- databases
- records
- information
- files
- and other documentation deemed necessary to fulfil their investigative roles.

All areas will provide requested information in a timely manner or in a specified timeframe as requested.

6. Responsible body for the oversight of the Complaints Handling and Management Policy: Regulation, Assurance and Quality

CSD, through the CHaMP, aims to give service users a way to voice their concerns and have these investigated impartially, independently, and fairly. CSD has given the RAQ Branch responsibility for overseeing this.

The CSD Executive directs the Executive Branch Manager of RAQ, with reference to the purpose of this Charter, to:

- update and review the CHaMP over time as needed
- ensure all Divisions follow the CHaMP when handling complaints
- report to the Director General and Executive Leadership Team on the handling and management of complaints in the Directorate
- work with the Divisions through the CSD Complaints Management Committee (CMC), including supporting staff who are directly handling complaints.

RAQ will work independently and be responsible directly to the Deputy Director-General.

7. How we will review the charter

There will be a standard review schedule. Outside of this, changes will be:

- made in consultation with the CSDCMC
- endorsed by the RAQ Executive Branch Manager, and
- approved by the Director-General.

8. Related policies

- *Australian Standard AS 10002:2022T1. Complaints Handling and Management Policy: Authorising Charter*
- *T2. Complaints Handling and Management Policy: How a complaint will be handled*
- *T2. Complaints Handling and Management Policy: Unreasonable conduct of a complainant*
- *T3. Complaints Handling and Management Procedure: How to handle a complaint*
 - *Housing ACT*
 - *Children, Youth and Families*
- *T3. Complaints Handling and Management Procedure: Unreasonable Conduct*
- *T3. Complaints Handling and Management Procedure: How a complaint will be handled by Regulation, Assurance and Quality*

9. Document information

Authorising officer:	Director-General, Community Services Directorate
Effective date:	6 October 2022
Last reviewed:	8 August 2023
Next review date:	interim review 12 months from authorisation full review 24 months from authorisation
Access:	Open access – Available to all staff and the public

10. Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Date	Amendment details
03/03/2022	Drafted document
07/04/2022	Review undertaken by members of the CSD Strategic Board of Management
02/09/2022	Acceptance of CSD Complaints Management Committee (CSD CMC) subcommittee member feedback. Version 2.0
30/11/2022	Final version following feedback from Communications and Media Team. Version 3.0
06/10/2022	Endorsement by CSD Strategic Board of Management
07/06/2023	Reviewed for grammatical errors and linkages to sources
08/08/2023	Minor amendment strengthening language used for requesting information from business areas. Endorsed by CSDCMC members.