



Service user policy: Complaints

Introduction

STAR has a number of service user policies that help us do our job in a way which is fair. This policy is about how to make a complaint and explains the steps you and STAR go through to have a complaint or problem sorted out.

STAR provides individual advocacy support for people with an intellectual disability and their families. If you have any feedback, good or bad, or you are not happy with STAR, we encourage you to tell us about this.

Complaints help us to improve our advocacy work. By making a complaint you are helping to sort out a problem and you are also helping STAR to make our advocacy support better for everyone.

Who can use this Complaints Policy?

People using STAR's advocacy support, the STAR Committee of Management, STAR members, our staff and volunteers have a right to make a complaint and it's ok to do so!

You have the right to

- talk to us about things you are not happy about
- make a complaint without worrying about being badly treated for making the complaint.
- be respected and to be listened to when you are talking about your own opinions or feelings
- access a copy of STAR's Constitution and other information which explain the way we work
- see and have a copy of your file
- have your own copy of this Complaints Policy and this will be provided in an accessible format
- get help from other groups outside STAR including involving an advocate

What do I do if I have a problem with STAR?

If you are not happy about something at STAR you can try to resolve it yourself, but you don't have to if you don't want to. You can:

- talk to the person you have the problem with. You might be able to work things out for yourselves
- talk to a STAR worker who can help you to try to resolve it.

- ask someone else to help you talk to the person you have the problem with. This could be a person or an advocate that you have chosen. STAR can give you a list of other groups that can help you make a complaint.

If this still doesn't work and you want to take the complaint further you can make a complaint in writing. You can make a complaint in writing straight away if you want to.

How to make a complaint

You can make your complaint to anyone at STAR. This person could be a staff member, the President of STAR, or another Committee member. You can also talk to someone from outside STAR and get them to help you make a complaint. This could be a friend or an advocate from another organisation.

Tell the person what you are unhappy about and why you are unhappy.

You will be asked to fill in a **Complaints Form**. This form will help STAR to make sure that something is done about the problem. The person you speak to will talk to you about your complaint and how it will be handled according to this policy.

Your complaint will be kept as confidential as possible. Only the people involved in your complaint will know about it and we will tell you who they are. If the complaint is about someone at STAR doing something against the law, we will have to inform the authorities and we will tell you about that before we do this.

Some complaints may be very serious. Examples of very serious complaints are assault, theft, and sexual assault. If your complaint is about something against the law, you should go to the police for help.

What STAR will do about your complaint

The STAR representative receiving the complaint will find the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint.

STAR will take your complaint seriously. Within 5 working days you will get a letter or email from STAR to arrange a meeting with you. At this meeting we will talk about your complaint. We will work out with you an agreed period of time for handling your complaint. In most cases the time taken will be no more than 15 working days. You will be told what will happen next. You are very welcome to bring a friend or an advocate to this meeting to support you.

Any person involved in investigating and resolving the complaint must not be named in the complaint. They must be free of any conflict of interest.

If a STAR worker is identified in the complaint, they have a right to be informed of the nature of the complaint. They are to be given an opportunity to respond fully and be represented.

Fairness will be the guiding principle using facts and respect. The person investigating should inform the person making the complaint about the process and their rights, including the right to timelines, fairness, and safety from discrimination or retribution. The person investigating will interview people who are witnesses and assure them of confidentiality and safety from retribution.

If STAR policies are found to have been breached corrective action may be recommended. This will be determined by the STAR Committee of Management and must be in line with the seriousness of the breach and any other factors

You will then be contacted and given an outcome to your complaint. We will explain the outcome to you and any person identified in the complaint giving reasons, remedies and action to be taken.

If after consideration there are grounds for believing the complaint is unfair and unfounded then the person who made the complaint will be told of the decision and reasons for this decision.

If you are unhappy with the outcome or the way your complaint was handled by STAR you can contact the Disability Services Commissioner and/or the Victorian Disability Worker Commission.

A confidential register of complaints will be kept by STAR including outcomes of all complaints. This is to be completed by the person investigating the complaint.

Where a complaint against STAR involves allegations of criminal activity, breaches of legislation or regulation, STAR will promptly refer the complaint to the appropriate authority, such as the police or the regulator.

Related policies

- Compliments, Complaints & Feedback form
- Your Rights & Responsibilities policy
- Individual Needs policy
- Privacy, Confidentiality & Dignity policy
- Vulnerable People policy
- Who can use STAR policy

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