

# LCP Complaint and Appeal Policy

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

**LITHGOW COMMUNITY PROJECTS INC (LCP) IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT ANY PERSON OR ORGANISATION UTILISING LITHGOW COMMUNITY PROJECTS, OUR SERVICES OR LINKED BY OUR OPERATIONS HAS THE RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL. ANY CONCERNS WILL BE ADDRESSED TO ENSURE ACCESS, EQUITY, FAIRNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY.**

**LCP WILL PROVIDE A COMPLAINT AND APPEAL MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE THAT:**

- **ADHERES TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR HOMELESSNESS SERVICES AND THE NSW SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS QUALITY STANDARDS**
- **COMPLIES WITH LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**
- **IS SIMPLE AND EASY TO USE**
- **IS EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED AND PROMOTED TO ALL CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS**
- **IS PROCEDURALLY FAIR AND FOLLOWS PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE**

## **PRINCIPLES**

**LCP WILL:**

- **CONSIDER ALL COMPLAINTS IT RECEIVES**
- **TREAT ALL COMPLAINANTS WITH RESPECT AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTIES INVOLVED**
- **ENSURE ADVOCACY IS AVAILABLE TO CLIENTS WHO MAKE A COMPLAINT**
- **RESOLVE COMPLAINTS**
- **DEAL WITH ALL COMPLAINTS IN A TIMELY MANNER**
- **KEEP PARTIES TO THE COMPLAINT INFORMED OF PROGRESS**
- **ENSURE THAT LITHGOW COMMUNITY PROJECTS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS ARE GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AS PART OF THEIR INDUCTION**
- **ENSURE ALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STAFF & VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE ONGOING TRAINING**
- **ENSURE ALL SERVICE USERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF THE COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**
- **ENSURE FEEDBACK DATA IS CONSIDERED IN ORGANISATIONAL REVIEWS AND IN PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT**

## PROCEDURES

### INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

LITHGOW COMMUNITY PROJECTS INC. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE WILL BE DOCUMENTED FOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN LCP COMPLAINT PROCEDURE DOCUMENT AND LCP CLIENT COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK FORM (APPENDIX A AND B) WHICH WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF INTAKE/ASSESSMENT (IN CONJUNCTION WITH CLIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES DOCUMENT) AND IS POSTED AT LCP MAIN STREET OFFICES AND LCP WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S CRISIS CENTRE OFFICE.

ALL CLIENTS WILL BE INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO THE COMPLAINT AND APPEAL AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

THE LCP COMPLAINT AND APPEAL PROCESS & FLOWCHART CONTAINS INFORMATION ON THE:

- INSTRUCTIONS FOR A COMPLAINT OR LODGE AN APPEAL
- CONTACT DETAILS FOR LODGING A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL
- PROCESS OF HOW THE ORGANISATION WILL DEAL WITH THE COMPLAINT OR APPEAL AND THE RIGHTS OF THE COMPLAINANT TO HAVE AN ADVOCATE, SUPPORT PERSON OR INTERPRETER
- INFORMATION ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THEIR COMPLAINT OR APPEAL
- INFORMATION REGARDING LODGING A COMPLAINT TO AN EXTERNAL BODY WITH CONTACT DETAILS (SEE NSW OMBUDSMAN GUIDELINES FOR CLIENTS DOCUMENT, APPENDIX C).

CLIENTS FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS OR WHO HAVE LIMITED UNDERSTANDING/USE OF ENGLISH WILL BE GIVEN INFORMATION AND/OR ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS THE ALL GRADUATES INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION SERVICE 1300 652 488.

### MAKING A COMPLAINT

A CLIENT WISHING TO MAKE A COMPLAINT MAY DO SO IN WRITING OR VERBALLY TO THE:

- STAFF MEMBER THEY WERE DEALING WITH AT THE TIME
- LCP SERVICE MANAGER
- LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, OR
- NSW OMBUDSMAN

IF THE COMPLAINT IS ABOUT:

- A STAFF MEMBER, THE COMPLAINT WILL BE DEALT WITH BY LCP SERVICE MANAGER
- A MEMBER OF LCP MANAGEMENT, THE COMPLAINT WILL BE DEALT WITH BY LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR OR THEIR DELEGATE.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS MAY BE SENT TO 28 MAIN STREET, LITHGOW NSW 2790.

LCP MANAGER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECEIVING CORRESPONDENCE.

## **LODGING AN APPEAL**

**CLIENTS OR THEIR ADVOCATES MAY LODGE AN APPEAL IF THEY DISAGREE WITH A DECISION MADE BY LCP, RELATED TO:**

- **INADEQUATE CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES**
- **THE DECISION WAS CONTRARY TO SHS POLICY**
- **THE DECISION INVOLVING A POOR INTERPRETATION OF POLICY**
- **THE PROCEDURE WAS NOT FAIR AND JUST AN APPEAL SHOULD BE MADE IN WRITING AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**
- **CONTACT DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT**
- **REQUEST FOR AN INTERPRETER**
- **REQUEST FOR AN ADVOCATE AND DETAILS**
- **OUTLINE OF THE DECISION REQUESTED TO BE REVIEWED**

## **PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINT AND APPEAL MANAGEMENT**

**THE PERSON MANAGING THE COMPLAINT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

### **1. PROCESSING THE COMPLAINT OR APPEAL:**

- **REGISTERING THE COMPLAINT OR APPEAL IN LCP COMPLAINT/APPEAL REGISTER (APPENDIX E) LOCATED AT 28 MAIN STREET LITHGOW.**
- **INFORMING THE COMPLAINANT THAT THEIR COMPLAINT HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME.**

### **2. INVESTIGATING THE COMPLAINT OR APPEAL:**

- **EXAMINATION OF THE COMPLAINT WITHIN 48 HOURS (2 WORKING DAYS)**
- **INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT AND DECIDING HOW TO RESPOND. REFER TO LCP COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOWCHART (APPENDIX D)**
- **COMPLAINT OR APPEAL WILL BE INVESTIGATED AND AN ATTEMPT TO CONTACT WILL BE MADE WITHIN 14 DAYS OF BEING RECEIVED. IF THIS TIMEFRAME CANNOT BE MET, THE COMPLAINANT WILL BE INFORMED.**

### **3. RESOLVING THE COMPLAINT:**

- **MAKE A DECISION OR REFER TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON AS OUTLINED IN APPENDIX D, WITHIN 14 DAYS OF THE COMPLAINT BEING RECEIVED. INFORM THE COMPLAINANT OF THE OUTCOME:**
  - **UPHELD**
  - **RESOLVED**
  - **NO FURTHER ACTION**
- **INFORM THE COMPLAINANT OF OPTIONS OR FURTHER ACTION IF REQUIRED.**

#### **4. REVIEWING THE COMPLAINT:**

**·IF THE COMPLAINANT IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE INVESTIGATION AND PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THEIR COMPLAINT OR APPEAL THEY ARE ENTITLED TO SEEK REVIEW WITHIN ONE WEEK OF RECEIVING NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION. THE LCP MANAGER WILL NOTIFY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER ACTION.**

#### **5. REFERRAL TO EXTERNAL PROCEDURE:**

**·A FORMAL EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE MAY FOLLOW STEP 4 IF THE COMPLAINANT IS STILL DISSATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME. THE COMPLAINANT WILL BE REFERRED TO THE NSW OMBUDSMAN.**

**6. OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM ALL PARTIES INVOLVED WITH COMPLAINT PROCESS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LCP COMPLAINT PROCESS.**

#### **7. ADVISING FACS OF COMPLAINTS;**

**·A SUMMARY OF THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN A FINANCIAL YEAR AND THEIR OUTCOMES WILL BE REPORTED TO FACS CONTRACT MANAGERS DURING THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS.**

#### **RECORD KEEPING**

**A REGISTER OF COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS WILL BE KEPT IN LCP COMPLAINTS/APPEALS REGISTER AT 28 MAIN STREET LITHGOW. THE REGISTER WILL BE MAINTAINED BY LCP MANAGER AND WILL RECORD THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH COMPLAINT OR APPEAL:**

- DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINANT AND THE NATURE OF THE COMPLAINT**
- DATE LODGED**
- ACTION TAKEN**
- DATE OF RESOLUTION AND DECISION**
- NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME**
- COMPLAINANT RESPONSE AND ANY FURTHER ACTION**

**COPIES OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE KEPT IN LCP MANAGER OFFICE AT 28 MAIN STREET LITHGOW NSW.**

**THE COMPLAINTS REGISTER AND FILES WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND ACCESS IS RESTRICTED TO LCP MANAGER AND LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

#### **RECORD KEEPING**

**A STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS WILL ALSO BE KEPT IN LCP COMPLAINTS/APPEALS SPREADSHEET AND MAINTAINED BY LCP MANAGER.**

**LCP MANAGER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING A REPORT ON THE:**

- NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED, RESOLVED AND CURRENT;**
- COMPLAINTS WERE HANDLED INTERNALLY/EXTERNALLY;**
- NATURE OF COMPLAINT;**
- AVERAGE TIME TAKEN TO REACH RESOLUTION**
- CHANGES MADE TO POLICY/SYSTEMS/PROCESSES**

RESULTS OF REPORT WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE LCP ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEWED IN STAFF MEETINGS AND USED TO:

- INFORM SERVICE PLANNING AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES
- INFORM DECISION-MAKING BY INCLUDING A REPORT AS A STANDARD ITEM ON STAFF AND MANAGEMENT MEETING AGENDAS

#### COMPLAINTS INVOLVING SPECIFIC STAFF MEMBERS OF VOLUNTEERS

THE LCP MANAGER HAS DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS OR DISPUTES INVOLVING STAFF MEMBERS OR VOLUNTEERS.

WHERE A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER MAKES A COMPLAINT CONCERNING ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER (OR VOLUNTEER), THIS WILL BE DEALT WITH IN ACCORDANCE TO THE LCP GRIEVANCE/CONFLICT MEDIATION POLICY.

COMPLAINTS BY CLIENTS OR STAKEHOLDERS MADE AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER WILL BE MANAGED BY LCP MANAGER WHO WILL:

- NOTIFY THE STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER OF THE COMPLAINT AND ITS NATURE
- INVESTIGATE THE COMPLAINT AND PROVIDE THE STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND ACCORDINGLY
- MEDIATE MINOR INCIDENT DISPUTE AND RESOLVE THE MATTER TO THE SATISFACTION OF COMPLAINANT
- TAKE ACTION NECESSARY TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

ANY DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER ARISING FROM A COMPLAINT WILL BE TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN LCP DISCIPLINARY ACTION POLICY.

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING THE LCP MANAGER WILL BE MANAGED BY LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR.

#### COMPLAINTS INVOLVING LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST AN LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER WILL BE REFERRED TO THE LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR. THE CHAIR, OR THEIR DELEGATE WILL:

- NOTIFY THE PERSON ABOUT WHOM A COMPLAINT IS BEING MADE AND ITS NATURE
- INVESTIGATE THE COMPLAINT AND PROVIDE THE MEMBER WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND
- ATTEMPT TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE (IF APPROPRIATE) AND/OR ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE MATTER TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE OUTSIDE PARTY.

WHERE THE LCP CHAIR IS THE SUBJECT OF A COMPLAINT, THE COMPLAINT SHOULD BE REFERRED TO A LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE OR OTHER OFFICE BEARERS.

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IF THE MATTER REMAINS UNRESOLVED, THE LCP CHAIR OR NOTIFIED OFFICE BEARER WILL RAISE THE MATTER AT THE NEXT LCP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING. DEPENDING ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE COMPLAINT, THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WILL:

- DEAL WITH THE MATTER AT THE NEXT MEETING
- REFER THE MATTER TO AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR OR EXTERNAL BODY SUCH AS JOBS AUSTRALIA, NSW OMBUDSMAN, NSW POLICE, FACS. (REFER TO LCP COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOW CHART. APPENDIX D)

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