

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc.

Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedures

Date ratified: 11/9/2023

Date for review: Annually

1. Aim and Scope

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre ('Zig Zag') aims to provide an appropriate, respectful and ethical service to all service users. The aim of this policy is to provide service users with a mechanism to address concerns via providing feedback and/or lodging a complaint if they feel that a satisfactory standard of service is not met.

The scope of this policy includes young women / young people accessing Zig Zag's services, their parents, guardians and support persons as well as community organisations who utilise Zig Zag's services who wish to provide feedback or lodge a complaint about the service that has been provided.

2. Policy Interpretations/Definitions

Feedback: a service user seeks improvement in a situation where they consider that appropriate standards have not been met. The service user perceives that the impact on her has not been substantial and seeks resolution in an informal way via talking directly to a worker or by using the Service User Feedback form.

Complaint: a formal process by which service users seeks some form of redress or change in a situation where they consider that there has been direct and significant adverse impact on her by a service they have received. The claim must be lodged in writing.

Support person: an external third party chosen by the service user to provide support through the feedback / complaints process. This support person may act as an advocate.

Investigation: a step within the formal complaints process which aims to discover whether claims made by service users can be substantiated. This is undertaken by an appropriate person, nominated by the staff team i.e. Complaint Investigator

Legal Process: serious claims of professional misconduct i.e. in relation to legislation such as Anti- Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Duty of Care.

Mediation: a step prior to the formal complaints process where an impartial third party assists the worker and service user to resolve the complaint.

Young women / young people: all young women / young person aged 12-25 years, inclusive of non-binary and gender diverse young people, who access Zig Zag services.

3. Policy Statement

Zig Zag is committed to ensuring that all service users have access to information about the feedback and complaints process. Zig Zag is also committed to utilising information gained through feedback and complaints to improve the quality of service provided.

Zig Zag young women/ young people, including non-binary and gender-diverse individuals, and their accompanying children, who access our services (*from this point forward, the term "young women" will be used to refer to all service users for clarity and consistency*), have a right to provide feedback and/or make a complaint about the

service they have been provided without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly.

4. Procedures

- Service users are to refer to Appendix A “Complaints flowchart for service users”. This provides an overview of the procedure for those making a complaint to Zig Zag.
- Workers and Management Committee are to refer to the Appendix B “Complaints flowchart for Workers”. This provides an overview of the procedure for those receiving and responding to complaints.

In addition to these documents the following procedures will apply:

- All service users will receive copies of the *Statement of Young Women’s Rights and Responsibilities* and the *Zig Zag Feedback and Complaints Policy* when first accessing services at Zig Zag. This Statement, and Complaints Forms, will be available in Zig Zag’s waiting area.
- In addition to being provided with written information, service users will be verbally advised of their right to make a complaint about the service they receive to Zig Zag, to an external complaints agency including the *Queensland Human Rights Commission* or to the Funding Body.
- Service users making complaints will be reassured that their rights to access Zig Zag services will not be affected for choosing to do so.
- All individuals in a complaints process have a responsibility to raise any conflicts of interest (refer *Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures*) in the complaints process. These will be assessed independently and addressed appropriately.
- Complaints about the CEO will be managed by the Management Committee.
- Other staff members cannot be the support person/advocate for the complainant in the complaints process.
- As far as possible and notwithstanding necessary investigation processes, all parties will endeavour to keep the details about feedback/complaints confidential.
- Where allegations are criminal in nature the organisation will refer onto, and assist the police in any way possible. Zig Zag workers and management committee members will not attempt to investigate criminal matters themselves.
- Procedure for lodging a complaint is based on the principles of natural justice. These principles apply to both parties:
 - The right to be heard. This means the right to a fair hearing with the opportunity to present one’s case.
 - The right to have a decision made by an unbiased decision maker.
 - The right to have the decision based on specific examples rather than generalisations or assumptions.

(From www.newcastle.edu.au/services/legal/justice-fairness.html)

5. Authority, Accountability and Reporting

The CEO is required to notify the Management Committee that a complaint has been lodged and to keep them informed of the handling and outcome of the complaint.

The Management Committee have the responsibility to be aware of the Zig Zag Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure and to ensure that all processes are consistent with this policy.

Workers and Management Committee members are accountable for receiving and responding to feedback and complaints in an appropriate and timely manner and following up with agreed actions as outlined in the procedures of handling feedback and complaints.

Service User feedback/complaints and all associated documentation must be kept on file:

- Anonymous feedback is kept in the Service User Feedback File
- Direct feedback / formal complaints is kept in the Complaints Register and young women's case file (confidential files).

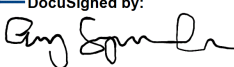
6. Related Legislation/Policies/Other Documents

- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Information Privacy Regulation 2009 (Qld)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld)*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1997 (Qld)*
- *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019*
- Young Women's Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- Privacy Statement
- Confidentiality of Young Women's Information Policy and Procedures
- Conflicts of Interests Policy and Procedures
- Duty of Care (General) Policy and Procedures
- Duty of Care Policy (Child Protection)
- Incident Management Policy and Procedures
- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019 (Qld)*

7. List of Appendices

- Appendix A: Complaints Flowchart for Service Users
- Appendix B: Complaints Flowchart for Workers
- Appendix C: Young Women's Complaints Form
- Appendix D: Service User Feedback Sheet

11/9/2023

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If you have some concerns or an issue regarding the service you have received, you can read a copy of your Rights and Responsibilities and the Zig Zag Feedback and Complaints Policy, or talk with a worker about your options for raising the concern/issue or you can make a complaint to an external agency who deals with complaints or directly to the Funding Body.

ZIG ZAG YOUNG WOMEN'S FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS PROCESS

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK

- Complete a Client Feedback Sheet and you can choose not to leave your name.
- You will not receive a response to your feedback but your comments will be provided to the relevant staff team and may be incorporated into planning and development.

DIRECT FEEDBACK

- Approach the CEO to discuss the procedure for providing direct feedback.
 - If your complaint is of a serious nature the Manager may ask you to consider a 'Formal Complaint' process outlined below.
- Alternatively the CEO will:
- Ask your permission to provide your feedback directly to the relevant worker/team.
 - Get your name and contact details so she can let you know of the organisation's response.

PROCESS FOR LEGAL MATTERS

It may be the case that the issue/concern you raise involves an alleged breach of law. In this circumstance, the other options outlined here may not be appropriate. The matter will be passed directly to the Management Committee who will seek legal advice and undertake the appropriate actions.

Mediation may be offered to resolve concerns with the assistance of an impartial third party

RESOLUTION

Your concerns are heard and there is an agreement regarding any outcome or actions.

NO RESOLUTION

Should you feel that the response you received from the organisation does not adequately address your concerns then you may choose to make a formal complaint. You can talk to a worker about Zig Zag's formal complaints process.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

- Submit your written complaint, outlining the circumstances and events that led to your dissatisfaction, and what you would like to see as an outcome (See the Complaints Form attached)
- Complaints of a serious nature, and/or complaints about the Manager, will be forwarded directly to the Management Committee.
- The CEO and/or the Management Committee will investigate the issues raised in your complaint.
- You can expect a response from the organisation within 10 working days. This response will outline the organisation's response and any actions taken in relation to your complaint.
- In some circumstances mediation may be offered to resolve the complaint with the assistance of an impartial third party.

RESOLUTION

Agreed actions are undertaken & you will receive a copy of documentation.

NO RESOLUTION

If you feel that the response from Zig Zag does not address your complaint, you have a right to have the decision reviewed either by Zig Zag or by going to an external party

EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Submit a complaint to an external party such as the Office of the Health Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission or directly to the Funding Body.

REVIEW OF ORIGINAL DECISION

Your complaint will be reviewed by Management Committee & a written response provided to you within 14 days.

process to service user through providing a copy of, and explaining, the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and the Feedback & Complaints Policy

WORKER PROCEDURES

Process for Legal Matters

- CEO/Worker receiving feedback documents immediately notifies Management Committee (MC).
- MC seeks legal/expert advice.
- Where allegations are of a criminal nature – MC to report to the police.

Where allegations not criminal:

- MC seeks legal/expert advice.
- MC informs worker/s of allegations made.
- MC investigates.
- MC allow worker/s time to respond (natural justice principles)
- MC meets with worker to discuss issues – worker encouraged to have a support person present.
- Appropriate action / follow up.
- MC provides feedback to the service user regarding their process and any outcomes.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK

received via Feedback Form

- No response is required.
- Feed back to team and incorporated into planning

DIRECT FEEDBACK

CEO/worker listens to service user's concerns and:

- Checks that it is OK to provide feedback directly to worker/team
- Speak to worker/team about the concerns and get response from worker/team
- Information will be documented on Concerns Register & passed onto relevant team
- Service user is contacted within 3 days and provided with a response to their concerns

RESOLUTION

- Expectations are clarified and outcome is negotiated with and communicated between both parties.
- Outcomes documented.

NO RESOLUTION

- Service user feels that response has not addressed concerns.
- CEO/worker informs service user again of formal complaints process.

Mediation may be offered to resolve concerns with the assistance of an impartial third party

FORMAL COMPLAINT

- Zig Zag receives a documented complaint, this is forwarded directly to the CEO who then provides acknowledgement to the service user immediately. The worker/team concerned receives a copy of the complaint.
- Complaints about the CEO will be forwarded directly to the management committee (MC) who will appoint someone to manage the complaint to ensure this policy is followed.
- CEO/MC contacts complainant within 3 days to acknowledge receipt of complaint, clarify any aspect of the complaint and notify that a response from the organization can be expected within 10 days.
- CEO informs the management committee (MC) that a complaint has been received and outlines details.
- CEO/MC investigates complaint, formulates a report for both complainant and worker/team outlining findings & recommended actions.
- Mediation may be offered to resolve complaint with the assistance of an impartial third party.

RESOLUTION

- Agreed actions are undertaken
- Resolution is documented & provided to all parties

NO RESOLUTION

- Service user feels that response does not address complaint.

EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- ZZ informs service user of alternative external complaints processes which are available including directly to the Funding Body

REVIEW OF ORIGINAL DECISION

- MC subcommittee gather documentation & contact service user to inform review
- The outcome & reasoning are communicated in writing to service user within 14 days

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc.

Privacy of Your Personal Information

Protecting your personal information has always been important to Zig Zag and is required by law. Zig Zag handles your personal information in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Privacy Act and set of National Privacy Principles. You are entitled to ask what information about you is being collected, why it is being collected and how it will be used.

What is personal information:

All information which can be used to identify an individual, such as a name, address, age, date of birth and gender, is personal. This also includes information about your health, family history, cultural information and financial or legal information. In some circumstances such as in individual counselling it is possible to access the Service without the collection of identifying information.

Collection, use and disclosure of your information:

We acknowledge that we collect sensitive information and therefore endeavour to comply with the privacy provisions for your protection.

To protect your privacy Zig Zag:

- ♦ provides the opportunity to have personal information recorded anonymously when accessing individual sexual assault or generalist counselling;
- ♦ ensures that statistics provided to funding bodies are non-identifying;
- ♦ *does not* release identifying information about you without your consent, except under the circumstances described below (see below "Obtaining your Consent").

If you are in our housing or have consented to being on the Zig Zag mailing list, your name and address will be used to send you general information about coming events.

Obtaining your consent:

Your consent will always be obtained before releasing personal information about you to anyone outside this Service.

The exceptions include (where your consent is not required):

- ♦ Where a worker has a duty of care to disclose personal information, for example when you are at risk of harming yourself or another person; when your safety or the safety of others is at risk; when a young woman is in an emotional/mental or physical state in which she is clearly unable to make an informed decision (e.g. unconscious);
- ♦ Where there is a court order or a legislative requirement;
- ♦ Where there are other legal or ethical obligations to disclose personal information.

Even under these circumstances Zig Zag workers will, wherever possible and/or appropriate, seek to gain your consent and/or keep you informed of the information disclosed.

You may ask a worker at Zig Zag to explain these exemptions more fully.

How to access your personal information:

You can access the information kept about you at Zig Zag. This information can be accessed only in the company of a Zig Zag worker. You can arrange to get a copy of the information kept on you – a worker can explain this procedure to you.

Security of your personal information:

Zig Zag staff ensure that any information collected which can identify a person is kept secure and is used only for authorised purposes.

Enquiries and further information:

If you are unclear about any of this information or if you are concerned about the privacy and protection of your information, please talk to a worker at Zig Zag eg your counsellor or support worker.

Zig Zag has several policies that cover the security, confidentiality and handling of your personal information. Please ask a Zig Zag worker if you would like to access these policies or would like them explained more fully.

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc

Young Women's Complaints Form



Phone: (07) 3843 1823 Fax: (07) 3398 5400
Email: info@zigzag.org.au

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre

Young Women's Complaints Form

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre values any feedback. Young women's complaints will be considered and taken seriously. Complaints will be shown to the CEO and will be reported to the Management Committee.

Relevant staff members and the CEO will meet within 1 week to discuss the complaint. Young women will be contacted within 10 days of the complaint being submitted and will receive a response from the CEO.

If you don't feel that the organisation has dealt with your complaint appropriately you can ask the Management Committee for the decision to be reviewed. Alternatively, you have the right to make a complaint about the service you receive to an external complaints agency or to the Funding Body.

It is important to remember that the organisation must often consider many different and competing issues when addressing complaints. Zig Zag will seek to resolve the issues raised in a manner which is fair and just to all involved.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Mobile: _____

Advocate I am complaining on behalf of: _____

Advocate's Name: _____

Advocate's Address: _____

Advocate's Phone number/s: _____

1. What Zig Zag Service are/were you accessing (e.g. Housing or Sexual Assault) and who was involved?

2. Date of the incident (if applicable): _____

3. What happened, where did it happen, who was involved and what did they do? Please try to describe what occurred. Attach separate page if needed.

4. How has this (the incident) impacted on you? What loss or harm have you experienced?

5. What would you like to achieve by this process? What do you want the workers/service involved to do?

6. Were there witnesses to the event/process? If appropriate you can provide their contact details.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc.

Appendix D – Service User Feedback Form

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc. value your feedback as it is vital to ensure the service we provide meets your needs and is a safe and supportive environment.

Which Zig Zag service(s) did you access?

☐ Housing Service

☐ Sexual Assault Service

☐ Intake Team

How did you find your interaction with Zig Zag staff?

Friendly

Not friendly

Respectful

Not respectful

Flexible

Not flexible

Approachable

Not approachable

Supportive

Not supportive

If not, why?

Other comments:

What needs did Zig Zag meet for you?

What needs has Zig Zag been unable to meet?

Are there any other comments or suggestion for improvement to the service that you would like to make?

Would you like a member of Zig Zag staff to contact you to discuss above issues?

Yes

No

If so, please write down your name, contact number and the worker's name you want to talk to:
