

## Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy

|                    |             |                       |                             |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy number      | 007         | Version               | V2                          |
| Drafted by         | Megan Fox   | Approved by Board     | 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2025 |
| Responsible person | Board Chair | Scheduled review date | August 2027                 |

### 1. Introduction

1.1 PRECI (Professionals and Researchers in Early Childhood Intervention) acknowledges and encourages feedback and complaints from within or outside of the organisation. PRECI listens and welcomes this input as another way of improving services and managing risk, fostering relationships with the community we serve and internally as an organisation.

1.2 PRECI's Feedback and Complaints procedure is based on the principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration into organisational culture.

### 2. Purpose

2.1 This policy is intended to ensure that PRECI will handle feedback and complaints fairly, in a timely manner fostering a culture of openness, respect and transparency.

2.2 This policy outlines the principles and procedures to follow in how feedback and complaints are received, recorded, managed and reviewed for continuous improvement.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all PRECI members and staff (paid and volunteer), contractors and funding bodies, receiving and/or managing complaints from the public and other stakeholders made to or about PRECI, regarding our organisation services, its members and staff or our policy and processes.

### 4. PRECI commitment & values

PRECI expects members and staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient feedback and complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from members and staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.

| Who                            | Commitment                                                                                                                                       | How                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PRECİ Chair</b>             | <p>Holds ultimate responsibility for management of Complaints</p> <p>Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution</p> | <p>Individual responsibility for final decisions if required beyond Board of Directors</p> <p>Provide governance, direction and support to those responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage all PRECI Directors to be alert to feedback and complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage recommendations for continuous quality improvement and risk management.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p> |
| <b>PRECİ Directors</b>         | <p>Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution</p>                                                                   | <p>Provide governance, direction and support to those responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage all PRECI Directors to be alert to feedback and complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage recommendations for continuous quality improvement and risk management.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p>                                                                                            |
| <b>PRECİ Members and staff</b> | <p>Demonstrate exemplary feedback and complaint handling practices</p>                                                                           | <p>Treat all people with respect</p> <p>Encourage and assist people to provide feedback</p> <p>Comply with our policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Provide regular feedback to the PRECI board on issues arising from feedback and complaints.</p> <p>Provide suggestions on ways to improve our feedback and complaints management system.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual feedback or complaints and from the analysis of feedback and complaint data as directed by Board of Directors</p>                                                                                                                                           |

## 5. Terms and Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about PRECI either directly or through social media about our services, members and staff or the handling of a complaint.
- **Dispute:** An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.
- **Feedback:** Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
- **Grievance:** Any formal complaint made by an individual organisational member or staff about another organisational member or staff or a work-related problem.
- **Policy:** A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.
- **Procedure:** Instructions that set out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

## 6. Guiding Principles

### 6.1 People Focus

- PRECI is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling.
- Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner.
- People making complaints will be:
  - ✓ provided with information about our complaint handling process and how to access it
  - ✓ listened to, treated with respect by board members and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
  - ✓ provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.
- No detriment to people making feedback or complaints

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people providing feedback or making complaints are not adversely affected because feedback or a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

- Anonymous feedback and complaints

We accept anonymous feedback and complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

- Accessibility

Feedback and/or complaints may be made in person, via e-mail or through the feedback and complaints tab on the website. ([www.preci.org.au](http://www.preci.org.au)). We will ensure that our systems for managing complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/ or resolution of their feedback or complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make feedback or complaints with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

- No charge

There is no fee for submitting feedback or complaints within or to our organisation

## **6.2 Response to complaints**

- Early resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us.

When appropriate, we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

- Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

We will assess and prioritise feedback and complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- ✓ the complaints process
- ✓ the expected time frames for our actions
- ✓ the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- ✓ their likely involvement in the process, and
- ✓ the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

## **6.3 Objectivity and fairness**

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest (COI), whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. For more detail on COI please refer to PRECI COI policy.

#### **6.4 Responding flexibly**

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

#### **6.5 Confidentiality**

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Refer to PRECI Privacy and Confidentiality policies for further details.

#### **6.6 Empowerment of staff**

All parties managing feedback and complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Members and Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our feedback and complaint management system.

#### **6.7 Managing unreasonable conduct by people making feedback and/or complaints**

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:

- ✓ our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- ✓ the health, safety and security of our members and staff, and
- ✓ our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

#### **6.8 Accountability and learning**

- Analysis and evaluation of complaints

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and the governing body of Directors.

A complaints register will be maintained and regular analysis of the register will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Register and analysis will be provided to our board of directors for review, at least annually.

Feedback and Complaints are classified according to 4 main levels:

Level 1: Comment about the service, or requests for information or clarification. Comments may be either positive or negative or may be suggestions for improvement

Level 2: Criticism or dissatisfaction about the service received, particularly where there is dissonance between the expressed need of the client and the service delivered.

Level 3: Concern or serious objection about the supports provided, where there is a high level of dissatisfaction or a specific grievance.

Level 4: Complaint about serious breaches of the service contract, or of rights, policy, or the legislative responsibilities of the service (for example, anti-discrimination legislation etc.)

### **6.9 Monitoring of the feedback and complaint management system**

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ✓ ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- ✓ identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- ✓ monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and external support where necessary.

### **6.10 Continuous improvement**

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our feedback and complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- ✓ support the making and appropriate resolution of feedback and complaints
- ✓ implement best practices in feedback and complaint handling
- ✓ recognise and reward exemplary feedback and complaint handling by Members and staff and
- ✓ implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

## **Related Documents**

Conflict of Interest Policy

Privacy Policy

Confidentiality Policy

## Feedback and Complaints Management Procedure

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### Introduction

When responding to feedback and complaints staff (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with feedback and complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance.

Members and staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to feedback and complaints.

The five key stages in PRECI's feedback and complaint management system are set out below



### 1. Receive

Complaints may be made in person to a PRECI board member, via the PRECI email or via the feedback and complaints tab on the website.

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, we will record the feedback or complaint and its supporting information on the complaints register located on the PRECI google drive.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

### 2. Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

### **3 Assess and investigate**

#### **3.1 Initial assessment**

After acknowledging receipt of the feedback or complaint, PRECI will confirm whether the issue/s raised is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

#### **3.2 Investigating**

After assessing, we will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person giving the feedback or complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue, person or area that the feedback or complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the feedback or complaint.

We will keep the person up-to-date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome using the most appropriate medium. The actions we take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

### **4. Determine outcome and provide reasons for the decision**

Following consideration of the feedback or complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person and advise them:

- The outcome and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

### **5. Close the complaint: document and analyse data**

#### **5.1 Document**

We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes
- The level of the complaint

Feedback and Complaints are classified according to 4 main levels:

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Level 4: Complaint about serious breaches of the service contract, or of rights, policy, or the legislative responsibilities of the service (for example, anti-discrimination legislation etc.)

## **5.2 Analyse data**

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the Board.