



COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

Policy

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1 PURPOSE

1.1 Bright Now welcomes feedback so we can better understand what we do well and how we can further improve. The purpose of this policy is to set out the way we manage and respond to feedback from clients, employees, stakeholders and the community.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all clients, employees, stakeholders and community members.
- 2.2 Whilst we invite feedback from all people and organisations, some issues may need to be dealt with differently or are better dealt with under a separate policy:
- (a) an issue that **may relate to unlawful or serious misconduct** may be raised in accordance with Bright Now's Whistleblower Policy;
 - (b) employees should raise any **work health and safety** issues with a Health and Safety Representative or the People and Strategy function; and
 - (c) contract issues can typically be raised with the Bright Now employee with whom you normally liaise.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Our Principles

- 3.1.1 Bright Now is committed to good governance and continuous quality improvement. We understand the key role feedback plays in helping us to improve the way we do things to fully serve the needs of the communities we support.
- 3.1.2 We acknowledge that as a Child Safe Organisation, feedback relating to child safety is particularly important to ensure children and young people are receiving optimum care.
- 3.1.3 Bright Now will respond to all feedback in an appropriate, fair, timely and confidential manner. We will respect the principles of procedural fairness (also known as 'natural justice').
- 3.1.4 We also acknowledge the disadvantage experienced by some sections of the community, including children and young people, such as those to whom we provide care. We understand the need to be flexible when responding to feedback from people experiencing disadvantage.

3.2 What is 'feedback'?

In this policy, feedback means compliments, general comments and complaints.

3.3 What is a 'compliment'?

In this policy, compliment means an expression of satisfaction relating to Bright Now or the services we provide.

3.4 What are 'general comments'?

In this policy, general comments means general information or suggestions that may help us improve the way we do things or further our mission to support our clients.

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3.5 What is a 'complaint'?

In this policy, complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction, or a grievance, relating to Bright Now or the services we provide or a child safety risk. However, a complaint does not include any current legal proceedings to which we are a party.

3.6 How you can provide feedback

If you feel comfortable providing feedback by discussing it with a Bright Now manager, Executive Manager or the CEO, then you are welcome to provide feedback directly.

You can also send feedback to feedback@brightnow.org.au. Feedback sent to this email address can only be accessed by the CEO and Executive Manager of Child Safety, Governance and Compliance (or a person fulfilling either role during an absence).

Young people to whom we provide care may provide feedback as above, however we encourage young people to provide feedback to their care team if they feel comfortable to do so.

3.7 What to include when providing feedback

When providing feedback to Bright Now, it is helpful if you also provide us with the following details so we can better understand, and investigate where necessary, any issues that you have raised with us:

- (a) your name and contact details;
- (b) how you interacted with Bright Now (eg as a client, contractor, partner, neighbour);
- (c) the name of any other person to which the feedback relates and their role at Bright Now;
- (d) any relevant dates, times or places; and
- (e) any other important details about the compliment, complaint or general comments that you would like to share.

The more details you provide us, the more thoroughly we can consider any issues raised.

You can choose to provide feedback anonymously or without providing contact details. However, if we do not have your contact details, we will be unable to communicate with you. In particular, this means that if you make a complaint, we will not be able to contact you to discuss ways that we can work to resolve the complaint.

3.8 Feedback relating specifically to children and child safety

- 3.8.1 **If you believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm** – If you believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, please contact the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or lodge an online eReport via the NSW Department of Communities and Justice's reporter community website: <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/how-do-i-make-ereport>.

If you are a mandatory reporter you are legally required to make a report if you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

If you believe a child or young person needs urgent help, please contact 000.

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- 3.8.2 **Other child-related feedback** – For all other feedback about Bright Now that relates to the children and young people for whom we provide care, we ask that you contact us at feedback@brightnow.org.au with ‘**child-related feedback**’ in the subject line. This will allow us to promptly identify the email as a child-related issue and respond accordingly.
- 3.8.3 As a Child Safe Organisation, issues relating to children and young people will typically be dealt with as a priority. Bright Now has legal and ethical obligations to protect children and young people from risk of harm. If your feedback contains information about Reportable Conduct under the *Children’s Guardian Act 2019* (NSW), Bright Now may be legally required to disclose that feedback to the NSW Government so that we can meet our obligations and protect children and young people. If we need to do this, we will notify you (if you have provided us with a way to contact you) and will explain the process.
- 3.8.4 Although you are not required to provide us with any contact details when you give feedback, we do kindly request that if you are raising an issue related to children and young people, you consider providing us with a way to contact you so that we can properly investigate the issue to ensure optimum care for the children and young people we support. (If you do not want to be identified, you might decide to communicate with us using an email address that does not identify you so that we can still have ongoing communication for the duration of our investigation of the issue).
- 3.8.5 We note that some people (such as employees, contractors and their relatives) may be protected by legislation if they tell us about a serious child safety issue. We encourage any person who believes a young person in our care is at risk of harm to refer to our **Whistleblower Policy** to determine whether it would be more appropriate for them to raise the issue under that policy.

3.9 How we will respond to feedback

- 3.9.1 We aim to acknowledge receipt of feedback within 2 - 5 business days.
- 3.9.2 We will do our best to provide an initial response within 14 days and to resolve all matters within 2 months. We note that the time it takes us to respond to your feedback may vary depending on whether the feedback was a compliment, complaint or general comment, the nature and seriousness of the feedback and whether we need to investigate before we can respond in full. Child safety-related feedback, or feedback relating to high-risk situations or unlawful conduct, will be given highest priority.
- 3.9.3 We take complaints seriously. All complaints received – no matter how big or small – must be recorded and escalated in writing to the relevant Executive Manager for acknowledgement and oversight no later than 1 day after the complaint was received.
- 3.9.4 If we need to investigate a complaint we have received, we may contact you for further details. We will afford every person involved procedural fairness. We will also keep you informed about our investigation process and contact you to advise of our intended approach to resolve the complaint.

3.10 How we maintain privacy and confidentiality

- 3.10.1 Bright Now will respect your privacy and feedback will be managed confidentially. We will protect any personal information received under this policy in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

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- 3.10.2 If we need to investigate an issue brought to our attention through feedback we have received, the investigator will do their best to maintain confidentiality, however it may be necessary for them to speak with people to better understand an issue and to afford every person procedural fairness. The investigator may also need to discuss the matter in the context of getting advice from specialists who are bound by confidentiality codes.
- 3.10.3 Despite our commitment to confidentiality and privacy, please be aware that in accordance with paragraph 3.8.3, we are legally required to disclose Reportable Conduct to the NSW Government to ensure the protection and safety of children and young people.

3.11 Communicating with respect

Bright Now will communicate with you respectfully and fairly. We believe in upholding human rights and will treat you with dignity. We also ask that any person who provides feedback to us communicates with us in a respectful and reasonable manner.

Where a person refuses to communicate with our employees in a respectful and reasonable manner, we may need to put temporary limits around the way that the person may contact us (for example, we may need to direct communications to a single point of contact at Bright Now). However, any such feedback limits do not apply to our provision of services or to the extent they would limit any person’s legal rights.

We do not condone frivolous or vexatious allegations about our services or employees.

3.12 Record keeping

Bright Now will keep accurate, secure and confidential records of feedback received, and the management of feedback, as appropriate. All employees are responsible for keeping records of complaints that they have received.

3.13 Policy revisions

From time to time Bright Now may make changes to this policy to improve its effectiveness.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for:

- (a) promoting a culture where compliments, complaints and general comments can be raised and are addressed in a fair, timely and confidential manner;
- (b) reviewing evidence, facts and recommendations and approving decisions and courses of action as needed; and
- (c) together with the Executive Manager, Child Safety, Governance and Compliance, managing the feedback@brightnow.org.au inbox.

4.2 CEO and Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Together, the CEO and the ELT are responsible for:

- (a) maintaining privacy and confidentiality of information received under this policy;

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- (b) providing alternative recommendations where necessary; and
- (c) overseeing the implementation of actions required to resolve complaints or other feedback, including ensuring management of feedback in accordance with paragraph 3.9.

4.3 Executive Manager, Child Safety, Governance and Compliance

The Executive Manager, Child Safety, Governance and Compliance is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring this policy is implemented; and
- (b) together with the CEO, managing the feedback@brightnow.org.au inbox.

4.4 Child Safety, Governance and Compliance function

The Child Safety, Governance and Compliance function are responsible for:

- (a) assisting with records management as required and in accordance with paragraph 3.12; and
- (b) providing advice and support in relation to this policy.

4.5 Managers and supervisors

All levels of management and all supervisors are responsible for:

- (a) implementing this policy in their work area; and
- (b) receiving feedback and managing responses to feedback as required and in accordance with this policy.

4.6 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- (a) understanding this policy; and
- (b) facilitating the receipt of feedback as required, including escalating complaints received in accordance with paragraph 3.9.3.

5 DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Complaint	Has the meaning given in paragraph 3.5.
Compliment	Has the meaning given in paragraph 3.3.
Feedback	Has the meaning given in paragraph 3.2.
General comments	Has the meaning given in paragraph 3.4.
Mandatory reporter	Means a person who is required to make a mandatory report under Part 2 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), and includes any person who provides services to children in the fields of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or

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law enforcement. For clarity, all Bright Now employees are mandatory reporters.

Note: The Act provides that other people are also mandatory reporters and we encourage people to do their own research about their mandatory reporter status.

Reportable conduct In accordance with section 20 of the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW), means:

- (a) a sexual offence;
- (b) sexual misconduct;
- (c) ill treatment of a child;
- (d) neglect of a child;
- (e) an assault against a child;
- (f) an offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW); or
- (g) behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Note: Further details of the meaning of (a) to (g) can be found in the Children’s Guardian Act 2019.

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6 RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

- Whistleblower Policy
- Grievances Policy and Procedure
- Rights of Children and Young People Policy
- Human Rights Statement
- Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- NDIS Practice Standards
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1997 (NSW)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

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