

External feedback management policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that external feedback received by the Sunshine Coast Health Network (SCHN) is responded to in a consistent, fair and timely manner and is used effectively to improve the organisation's performance and relationship with stakeholders.

Scope

Inclusions

- This policy applies to all SCHN staff
- With the exception of the items listed under 'exclusions', this policy covers all feedback received from outside the organisation, whether positive or negative. This includes:
 - privacy complaints, which will be referred for handling to the SCHN Privacy Officer (as per the *Privacy complaints investigation procedure*), and
 - feedback from individuals about a SCHN commissioned service they have accessed. SCHN encourages individuals to give feedback directly to service providers in the first instance. However, if an individual does not feel comfortable doing this, or their concerns remain unresolved after providing feedback directly, SCHN will respond to their feedback under this policy.

Exclusions

This policy excludes:

- PHN staff grievances (refer to the *Grievance procedure*)
- commissioned service providers' reporting of clinical incidents and near-misses. These should be reported to the relevant SCHN contract manager or program lead, and
- commissioned service providers' feedback to SCHN about matters pertaining to their contract with SCHN. Service providers should raise these issues in contract review meetings or by contacting the relevant SCHN contract manager or program lead.

Policy statement

Rationale

SCHN believes that effective management of external feedback is important because it:

1. strengthens the organisation's services and administration processes: feedback highlights improvement opportunities in programs, activities, policies, procedures and commissioned services, and
2. builds the organisation's reputation in the community and relationships with clients, stakeholders and health system consumers as a result of responsive, fair and consistent management of feedback.

Key elements

To achieve its objectives, the SCHN external feedback management approach involves:

- ensuring all SCHN staff, at all levels, understand their role in complying with the *External feedback management policy and procedure*
- a dedicated Feedback Officer who is responsible for managing the administration of the feedback management systems and processes

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- ensuring all feedback is investigated and responded to in an appropriate manner and within reasonable timeframes
- resourcing investigation and resolution of issues identified through feedback, and
- identifying trends and ensuring action is taken to address any issues identified.

Principles

The following principles underpin the SCHN's approach to managing external feedback:

Accessibility

The SCHN will ensure that this policy and the *External feedback management procedure* are available at all times from the organisation's website along with the appropriate form for providing feedback. In addition, the following guidance will be maintained on the website:

- the feedback management process
- anticipated timeframes for completion of the process and response, and
- further options in the event that a person is dissatisfied with the outcome or how the PHN managed the feedback.

Fairness

The PHN will manage all feedback with fairness and integrity.

Responsiveness

SCHN will promptly acknowledge receipt of feedback and comply with the timeframes set out in the *External feedback management procedure* where possible. Where usual timeframes will not be met due to resourcing or complexity, SCHN will keep the individual providing feedback informed.

Proportionality

SCHN will handle feedback in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the matter being addressed. Proportionality is ensured by the consequence categorisation and escalation matrix set out in the *External feedback management procedure*.

Transparency

SCHN will inform individuals providing feedback of the outcome of the investigation unless they have elected to remain anonymous or indicated that they do not wish to be contacted. Where feedback relates to high-risk or complex circumstances, SCHN may request individuals to provide further information.

Confidentiality

SCHN acknowledges that all individuals have a right to privacy and will:

- ensure feedback is investigated in confidence, and
- observe relevant privacy regulations when collecting, storing, using and disclosing personal information.

Where personal information inadvertently becomes public, SCHN staff will comply with the SCHN *Data Breach Policy*.

Risk

Where necessary, the Feedback Officer will record and escalate external feedback that identifies an issue or concern posing a risk to SCHN.

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Continuous improvement

SCHN will use external feedback to identify and report trends, eliminate causes of negative feedback and drive improvement of SCHN's systems and processes.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All PHN staff	Awareness of policy, and when responding to external feedback on behalf of SCHN, compliance with principles stipulated.
Senior Manager, Quality and Risk	Compliance, monitoring, review and receiving feedback in relation to the policy
Feedback Officer	Reporting and records management

Associated documents

SCHN policies, procedures, frameworks

Document number	Document name
PRO-CC-001v1	External feedback management procedure
POL-PRI-002v2	Data breach policy
PRO-PRI-003v1	Privacy complaints investigation procedure

Review and feedback

This policy will be reviewed by SCHN in 2 years from approval. SCHN staff and affected stakeholders may provide feedback on this policy to Senior Manager, Quality and Risk.