

## POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee of Management (COM), Executive and Management of Are-able are committed to providing an effective and responsive feedback and complaint management system to support consistency and high-quality management of feedback and complaints.

All complaints will be taken seriously. When complaints are received, they will be assessed, prioritised, documented, and recorded. Resolution will occur at a local level (with the original decision maker) wherever able and as quickly as possible.

Are-able is committed to:

- Ensuring the feedback and complaints handling process protects the right of any person to lodge feedback or a complaint without fear of retribution.
- Their privacy is respected and to be kept informed of the progress of the complaint
- The importance of feedback and complaints whether they are verbal or in writing.
- Recognising the value of feedback and complaints to quality and continuous improvement.

Serious allegations will be addressed within 24 hours, and if a serious complaint involves a Are-able Employee, volunteer, or contractor, or Committee of Management Member, that person shall not have contact with the Complainant involved.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Are-able Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, and Committee of Management Members and covers all services relating to Are-able.

Complaints managed in line with this policy are those where the employee, supported employees, service users, families, carers, advocates, and any other person acting on behalf of a supported employee or service user expresses dissatisfaction about the service or action of Are-able or its staff.

Other types of feedback include compliments about the service or action/s of Are-able or its staff and suggestions for improvement regarding the service provided by Are-able or its staff.

The Complaints & Feedback Management Policy responds to the requirements of the *Disability Services Act 2006* and Are-able Complaints and Feedback Management Procedure.

## OBJECTIVE

This policy demonstrates Are-able' commitment to complying with legal and ethical obligations. All feedback and complaints raised, steps taken and final resolutions will be recorded in the appropriate Register. All records will be dealt with in accordance with the Are-able Privacy Policy.

All formal complaints are addressed with integrity, impartiality, compassion, and confidentiality within established timeframes and assessed and prioritised in an equitable manner.

The Complainant's consent will be obtained before proceeding with any complaint.

Are-able supports the Complainant in having an advocate present at any stage of the complaints process.

Throughout the resolution of a complaint, Are-able will ensure access to external agencies for support and/or advice is made available.

Feedback and complaint data is acted on, learnt from, and used to enable identification of problems and the improvement of services.

Any situation that involves breaking of a law will be referred to the police or other appropriate external organisation.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Confidentiality:** Others within Are-able should not have access to information on the complaint, other than those directly involved or those handling the complaint. If a serious complaint involves a Are-able Employee, Volunteer, Contractor, or Committee of Management Member, that person shall not have contact with the Complainant involved.

**Impartiality:** All parties must be given the opportunity to present information directly related to the complaint, and no decisions or judgements will be made until all information has been carefully and impartially considered by those responsible for resolving the complaint.

**Compassion and respect:** All people handling the complaints must be sensitive to the needs of those directly involved and to others who may be directly affected by the complaint.

**Prompt action:** All complaints must be dealt with promptly and time limits should be formally agreed to at all stages of the process.

**Freedom from persecution or unjust repercussions:** No form of persecution, harassment or discrimination will be tolerated as a result of a complaint, or as a consequence of the complaint's outcome.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually through Internal Audit under Quality Management.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENT

<b>LEGISLATION</b>	<i>Disability Services Act 2006</i> Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Your Right to Rights (easy English)
<b>REPORTING</b>	Disability Services Commissioner
<b>Are-able POLICY</b>	Privacy Policy (G1.5) PC Equal Opportunity Policy (PC25) PC Discrimination Policy (PC26) PC Sexual Harassment Policy (PC28) PC Indigenous Employment Policy (PC30) PC Workplace Bullying Policy (PC27) Freedom from Abuse and Neglect Policy (G7.20)
<b>OTHER</b>	Department of Education, Skills & Employment – Complaints, compliments and suggestions form Job Access Complaints Poster National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules