Purpose

Estia exists to support people with disability to live with dignity, exercise choice, strengthen belonging and experience a full everyday life. This policy explains how people can raise a complaint and how Estia will respond fairly, respectfully and promptly.

Every person supported by Estia will be known, respected and included. We welcome complaints and feedback as opportunities to understand people's experiences, address concerns and improve our services.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to complaints about Estia's services, workers, decisions or actions. Participants, families, carers, advocates, support coordinators, plan managers, workers and members of the public can raise a concern. All Estia workers must support access to the complaints process.

Staff employment grievances and whistleblower disclosures are also managed through the relevant internal procedures. Where a complaint involves an incident or possible harm, Estia will act through its safeguarding and incident management procedures as well. A complaint must not delay safety action or required reporting.

Policy objectives

1. Make it safe to speak up

People can raise a concern without fear of threats, retaliation, victimisation or reduced support. Making a complaint will not disadvantage a participant. Support will continue unless a change is necessary for safety; any change will be explained and discussed with the person.

2. Provide an accessible process

We accept complaints in person, by telephone, email or letter, or through a complaint form. People do not need to use a particular form or call their concern a formal complaint. We will help people communicate in their preferred way and access an interpreter, accessible information or an independent advocate.

3. Listen and respond fairly

We listen without dismissing or minimising concerns, ask what outcome the person would like, and consider the facts fairly. People involved will have an appropriate opportunity to respond while we protect participants, privacy and the integrity of any investigation.

Policy objectives continued

4. Respect privacy and confidentiality

Complaint records are kept securely. Information is shared only where needed to assess and resolve the concern, protect someone's safety, or meet legal obligations. We cannot promise absolute confidentiality. We respect consent when involving family members, advocates or other supporters.

5. Respond promptly and keep people informed

We acknowledge complaints within two business days and aim to resolve them within 21 business days. We explain who is managing the complaint and the expected timeframe. If more time is needed, we explain why and provide weekly updates.

6. Learn and follow through

We explain our findings, reasons and any action we will take. We record outcomes, check whether the person is satisfied and explain review options. Improvements may include an apology, changes to support, staff training, corrective action or policy changes. Agreed improvements are tracked through Estia's continuous improvement process.

How to make a complaint

Speak with any Estia worker, your house manager or the Chief Executive Officer. A family member, friend, advocate or support person can help you or raise a complaint on your behalf, with your consent. Concerns about the CEO can be directed to the Chair of the Board through Estia's office.

Telephone: 02 9879 8000
Email: admin@estia.org.au
Write to: Estia Foundation of Australia, 5–7 Pearson Street, Gladesville NSW 2111.

Tell us what happened, how it affected you and what you would like us to do. We can help you explain your concerns or complete a complaint form. An interpreter can be arranged where required at no cost to you.

What happens after a complaint is received

Receive and record: We listen, check immediate safety needs and record the complaint in Estia's Complaints Register within 24 hours. We provide a reference number and contact person.

Acknowledge: Within two business days, we confirm receipt and explain the next steps, expected timeframe and available communication or advocacy support.

Assess and investigate: Within five business days, we assess the seriousness and urgency of the concern and begin reviewing the relevant information. Serious concerns are escalated promptly to the CEO. Immediate safety action and mandatory notifications take priority.

Responding and resolving

We aim to provide an outcome within 21 business days. We explain what we found, the reasons for our decision and the actions we will take, while respecting other people's privacy. We ask whether the proposed resolution addresses the concern. Complex matters may take longer; we explain any delay and provide weekly updates.

We record the outcome, actions and the person's response, and advise when the complaint is closed. The internal policy targets closure and learning within 30 days; complaints requiring further investigation or action remain open with progress documented. A person can seek review even if Estia has completed its internal process.

If you are unhappy with the outcome

You can ask the Chief Executive Officer to review the outcome if they have not already managed the complaint. Concerns about the CEO can be referred to the Chair of the Board through Estia's office.

You can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission at any time. You do not need to complain to Estia first or wait for Estia's response.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
Telephone: 1800 035 544
Online: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints/report

The Commission can arrange interpreting assistance. People who are deaf or have hearing or speech impairment can use the National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544. Other external review bodies may be relevant depending on the nature of the complaint; Estia will help explain available options.

In an emergency or immediate danger, call 000.

Respectful communication

We treat everyone respectfully and ask that communication remains safe. Where behaviour is threatening, abusive or persistently unreasonable, the CEO may set reasonable communication arrangements, such as a single contact person. Reasons will be documented and explained in writing. These arrangements do not remove a person's right to complain or contact an external body.

Responsibilities and implementation

The Board oversees the complaints framework and reviews trends and response timeframes quarterly. The CEO is accountable for implementation, serious complaints and unresolved concerns. Managers coordinate investigations, maintain records and implement improvements. All workers must listen respectfully, record concerns promptly and escalate risks.

This website version is a draft for Board approval. The policy will be reviewed annually and earlier when significant concerns, changes in requirements or opportunities for improvement are identified. Accessible information and assistance are available on request.

Related policies and standards

Read with Estia's internal Complaints Management Policy 03.5.1, Complaints Register and Reporting Procedure, Advocacy Access and Support Procedure, participant feedback, consent, privacy, incident management, whistleblowing and continuous improvement policies. Relevant standards include the NDIS Practice Standards on Feedback and Complaints Management and the NDIS Code of Conduct.