

Feedback and Complaints Management Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a clear and accessible system for receiving, acknowledging, assessing, managing and resolving feedback and complaints about supports provided by Alere Care and Support. It supports participant rights, procedural fairness, timely resolution and continuous improvement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Alere Care and Support workers, contractors, volunteers, students and management, and to feedback or complaints received from participants, families, representatives, advocates, workers, other providers or members of the community about Alere Care and Support supports, services or complaint handling.

3. Our Commitment

- feedback and complaints are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and used to improve supports;
- participants can complain without fear of reprisal, disadvantage, withdrawal of supports or adverse treatment;
- complaints are handled in a way that is accessible, culturally safe, person-centred and proportionate to the issue;
- people may use an advocate, interpreter, communication support or trusted person throughout the process;
- privacy and confidentiality are respected, subject to safety, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- complaints are handled consistently with procedural fairness and natural justice.

4. Definitions

Feedback may be positive, negative or a suggestion for improvement. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about supports, services, decisions, conduct or the way a previous complaint was handled where a response or resolution is expected. A person does not need to use the word “complaint” for their concern to be treated as one.

For this policy, a participant is a person receiving supports or services from Alere Care and Support. A participant representative may include a family member, friend, guardian, plan nominee, financial manager or advocate acting with appropriate authority or consent.

5. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Anyone may provide feedback or make a complaint, including a participant, family member, representative, guardian, plan nominee, financial manager, advocate, Alere Care and Support worker or representative, professional, other provider, community member or member of the public. Complaints may be made anonymously. A participant may choose another person to make or assist with a complaint on their behalf.

6. How Feedback and Complaints Can Be Made

Feedback or complaints may be made in person, verbally, in writing, by email, phone, through an Alere Care and Support worker or manager, via the website, or by another accessible method agreed with the person. Current contact details are:

- Email: karen@alerecareandsupport.com.au
- Post: 64 Crane Street, Ballina NSW 2478
- Phone: 0431 428 336
- Website: alerecareandsupport.com.au

Workers who receive a complaint must listen respectfully, ensure any immediate safety concern is addressed, and promptly notify management. Feedback and complaints help Alere Care and Support identify problems, improve services and achieve better participant outcomes.

A person does not have to complain to Alere Care and Support first. They may contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or another appropriate external body at any time.

7. Accessible and Supported Complaints

Alere Care and Support will make reasonable adjustments so people can understand and use the complaints process. This may include Easy Read information, additional time, preferred communication methods, an interpreter, communication aid, advocate or support person. Information about external complaint avenues and advocacy will be provided in a way the participant can understand.

8. Complaint Management Procedure

Management will use a proportionate approach based on the nature, seriousness, urgency and complexity of the matter.

- **Receive and acknowledge** - The worker receiving the complaint will listen, clarify the concern and desired outcome where possible, address immediate safety issues and complete a Feedback and Complaint Form with as much detail as practicable. The form and supporting information must be forwarded promptly to the CEO or delegated manager. The complaint will be recorded in the Complaints Register and the complainant acknowledged within the timeframe in section 9.
- **Assess and safeguard** - Consider immediate safety, risk, conflicts of interest, communication needs and whether the matter also requires incident, mandatory reporting, Police, child protection, privacy or other external action.
- **Plan the response** - The CEO or delegated manager will decide who will manage the complaint, identify any conflict of interest, determine what information is required, set expected timeframes and decide how the complainant and participant will be kept informed. Relevant records will be stored in the controlled complaints file.
- **Resolve or investigate** - Straightforward matters should be resolved promptly. Where investigation is required, relevant information will be gathered objectively, affected people will be given a fair opportunity to respond, and the investigation and required actions will be documented. Where required, the CEO will liaise directly with the NDIS Commission or other authority.
- **Communicate the outcome** - The CEO or delegated manager will explain the outcome, reasons where appropriate, actions taken or proposed, and available review or external complaint options. Where the person is dissatisfied, Alere Care and Support will continue reasonable efforts to resolve the matter and will not prevent the person from approaching the NDIS Commission or another external body.
- **Close and follow up** - The Feedback and Complaint Form, investigation record and Complaints Register will be finalised; corrective actions will be allocated and monitored; relevant records will be stored securely; and follow-up with the participant or complainant will occur where appropriate. If required, the matter will be recorded or responded to through the NDIS Commission portal.

9. Timeframes and Communication

Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 business days wherever practicable and progressed promptly. Alere Care and Support aims to investigate and provide an initial response or resolution within 5 business days where the nature and complexity of the complaint allows. If more time is required, the complainant will be advised of the reason, expected timeframe and progress. Simple matters should be resolved as early as possible.

10. Participant Safety and Complaints That Are Also Incidents

A complaint that raises an allegation or concern about abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, sexual misconduct, unauthorised restrictive practice, serious injury, privacy breach or another safety issue must also be assessed under the Incident Management Policy and Procedure and, where relevant, the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure. The complaints process must not delay immediate safeguarding or required external notification.

11. Procedural Fairness and Natural Justice

Complaints will be handled impartially and without predetermined conclusions. A person whose conduct or decision is the subject of a complaint will, where appropriate and consistent with participant safety, be informed of the substance of the concern and given a reasonable opportunity to respond. Decisions will be based on relevant information. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest will be managed, including appointing another person to handle the complaint where necessary.

12. Complaints About Workers or Management

Workers must not investigate complaints about themselves or pressure a participant or complainant to withdraw or change a complaint. Complaints about a worker will be referred to appropriate management. A complaint about the person normally responsible for complaints will be escalated to another suitable person with sufficient independence and authority. Serious conduct concerns may also be managed under workforce, safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

13. Confidentiality and Records

Complaint information will be shared only with people who need it to manage the matter, protect a person, comply with law or meet regulatory obligations. Alere Care and Support will maintain a Complaints Register showing the status of each complaint, including whether it is open or closed, and relevant complaint records including the issue raised, actions taken, communications, investigation, outcome, corrective actions and closure. The CEO will regularly review the Complaints Register. Complaint records will be retained for at least 7 years from the date of the complaint and stored securely in accordance with Privacy, Information Security and Records Management requirements.

14. External Complaint and Advocacy Options

A person may seek independent advocacy or complain externally at any time. This includes the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission for concerns about the quality or safety of NDIS supports and services. The NDIS Commission can be contacted on 1800 035 544 or through its complaints information at ndiscommission.gov.au. Depending on the issue, a matter may also need to be referred to Police, a privacy regulator, child protection, SafeWork NSW, a consumer affairs body or another relevant authority. Alere Care and Support will assist a participant to access an advocate or external complaint avenue where requested and appropriate.

15. Worker Responsibilities and Training

Workers receive information and training on complaint handling during induction and through refresher training, supervision or targeted learning as required. Workers must understand how to recognise a complaint, respond respectfully, escalate it promptly, protect confidentiality and avoid retaliation or interference. Workers must not discourage a person from making a complaint or contacting an external body.

16. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Management will periodically review feedback, complaints, outcomes, response times, participant and worker views, corrective actions and trends. Reviews will consider the accessibility and effectiveness of the complaints system and identify systemic issues, training needs or changes required to supports, policies, risk controls or service delivery. Relevant improvements will be recorded and monitored through the Continuous Improvement Register.

17. Related Documents

- Feedback and Complaint Form and Complaints Register;
- Incident Management Policy and Procedure and Incident Register;
- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure;
- Participant Rights and Responsibilities documentation and Advocacy Policy;
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, Information Security Policy and Records Management Policy;
- Risk Management Policy and Continuous Improvement Register; and
- Code of Conduct and relevant workforce policies.

18. Relevant Legislation, Standards and Guidance

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth);
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018, as in force;
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018, as in force;
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018;
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators - Feedback and Complaints Management;
- NDIS Code of Conduct; and
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission guidance on effective complaint handling.

19. Version Control and Approval

Version	Date	Author	Summary of changes
2.0	30/09/2026	Karen Fleming	Updated to incorporate established complaint intake, contact, acknowledgement, investigation, register, record-retention and external referral processes.

Approved by	Karen Fleming, CEO
Effective date	September 2026
Review date	September 2027 or earlier if legislation, NDIS requirements, service scope or complaint trends change