



***MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS
POLICY AND PROCEDURE***

July 2022
Revised Annually

1. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out how a person can provide feedback and make a complaint about any aspect of The Foot Stop Podiatry Service and outline the steps The Foot Stop Podiatry Service will take to acknowledge, assess and resolve the complaint in a fair, efficient and timely manner.

We aim to support and encourage all our patients to be involved in the management of their health care. Our staff understand that perceptions of what is reasonable can change when people are impaired, unwell or anxious and are receptive to feedback and will handle complaints in a courteous and empathetic manner. Our staff receive training in responding to concerns when raised and acknowledge that a well-managed complaint can maintain and improve the relationship between our staff and our patients.

The responsibility of effective implementation of the complaint management procedure is with the Director and the management team of The Foot Stop Podiatry Service.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure apply to:

- All the Foot Stop Podiatry Service staff and workers, whether permanent or casual, contractors, volunteers or business partners.
- All patients and their families

3. Upholding this policy

Information regarding our complaints management policy and procedure is also provided on our website at www.thefootstoppodiatry.com.au. Management undertakes to treat any complaint in a fair, clear and consistent manner to all people regardless of disability, gender or ethnicity.

Complaints can be raised:

- Verbally with any staff member
- By email
- Face to face with staff
- By phone
- By writing

When receiving complaints our staff follow these processes and aim for resolution ensuring that all the issues are identified and that everything that can be done to rectify the situation is identified and actioned. We aim to act promptly and resolve any issues raised within a timely immediate manner.

4. Governance

Staff roles:

All our team are introduced to the complaints procedure and policy at staff induction. Staff are receptive to patients' concerns and feedback. All concerns are treated seriously, and confidentially and any input is valued and respected, as a complaint is an opportunity to identify problems with the delivery of our services and can lead to quality improvements. Staff encourage raising concerns directly with the clinical provider or the practice management in order to resolve problems directly and in a timely manner.

Complaints form part of the performance reviews for staff, where outcomes will be discussed. Any additional training and support identified for the member of staff will be provided which will be monitored and supervised by line manager.

Identified learning or themes from complaints that is applicable to all staff will be discussed at the staff team meetings.

Confidentiality:

We ensure that all our patients will not be subjected to any prejudicial treatment following making a complaint and respect the confidentiality of all parties, in accordance with Privacy legislation.

Reporting process:

At The Foot Stop Podiatry Services complaints can be directed either to the Practice Manager/Clinical Manager and/ or provider (Podiatrist) treating the patient.

If the complaint is provided verbally the person making the complaint or their representative will be taken to a private area of the practice to discuss the matter further. If this is not possible at the time, an appointment will be made to meet.

The complaint will be listened to carefully and notes may be taken. The problem will be repeated back to the patient for clarification. The patient will be reassured that the complaint will be thoroughly investigated within a short time frame.

Where possible a resolution will be sought at the time of the complaint or if required it will be directed to another authority e.g., NDIS, AHPRA (see relevant sections).

If a patient prefers to make a formal written complaint:

The practice/clinical manager will provide a form which will ask the nature and details of the complaint occurred and who was involved. The form will be kept by the practice manager in confidence.

The practice/clinical manager will acknowledge receipt of a complaint unless it was made anonymously or the contact details of the person initiating the complaint are omitted.

The practice / clinical manager will make contact to clarify the details surrounding the complaint (if the complaint has been made by or on behalf of a person with a disability (please refer to the section headed NDIS).

If the complaint concerns the podiatrist, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) may be contacted for further advice.

It is our policy that every complaint, either written or verbal will be documented in our complaints forms and register but **not** into the patient's health record. This is necessary for quality improvement. Complaints records are retained for a minimum of seven years.

All our staff are informed and trained in our complaints process. Whilst complaints are managed by the Practice/Clinical Manager in the instance that the complaint involves the Practice/Clinical Manager or the complainant prefers not to raise the complaint with the practice/clinical manager, then the complaint will be directed to the Director who will manage the complaint.

(NDIS) Disability complaints reporting:

All our staff are trained to support participants who are intending to make a complaint or any person with a disability affected by issues raised in a complaint.

The Foot Stop has an easy read version of complaints management and how to make a complaint accessible to those who require it.

All our staff are aware of the holistic care of participants and raise any risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of people living with disability and are alert to issues or situations that could negatively affect an NDIS participant.

Our staff will encourage participants in the NDIS to provide feedback regarding the services provided and any expectations that have not been met. Individuals can use an advocate if they prefer to act on their behalf. The advocate can be a family member, friend, or sources from the National Disability Advocacy Program

If an NDIS participant is unsure whether they want to complain and are dissatisfied it is recommended, they call and discuss the problem with the Practice Manager or Clinical Manager.

A complaint can be raised to the NDIS Commission by:

P: 1800 035 544 or TTY 133 677 (interpreters can be arranged)
Using the National Relay Service and asking for 1800 035 544
Completing a complaint contact form to let the NDIS Commission know your preferred contact method.

If the nature of the complaint refers to the NDIS complaint process or the Commission's decision in relation to a complaint the participant will need to apply for a reconsideration of the decision (contact details below: (A reconsideration application will need to be received within 42 days of the parties involved being notified of the decision)

E: complaints@ndiscommission.gov.au

P: 1800 035 544

Post: Assistant Director, Quality Assurance, NDIS Commission, PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750

Rights of the Patient:

All our patients have a right to access services which address healthcare needs. We are committed to the highest ethical standards and recognize a duty to provide high quality and skilled healthcare.

We treat our patients with courtesy and respect and recognize that patients from other cultures may have beliefs and values that differ from our own.

We endeavour to communicate with our patients in all aspects of their podiatry care in an open and transparent manner and recognise and encourage a patient's right to be involved in choices regarding their treatment.

Management of information involves respecting patients' privacy without compromising health or safety. This applies to all data including clinical data. Personal information will only be shared with the consent of the individual or with lawful authorisation. Please refer to our Privacy Policy for detailed information.

Rights of Staff:

Our practice values and recognises the rights of all people protecting the wide range of civil, cultural, economic and social rights that apply to all our patients and staff. Whilst we recognize that complaints are an important source of feedback, we also encourage our patients to have reasonable expectations about the outcomes they seek.

We aim to provide a framework that protects both staff and patients against any form of prejudicial treatment by providing a thorough, fair, and transparent investigative process.

5. Policy Procedure

Response to a complaint:

Once a complaint is received it will be entered into our complaints register. If the complaint relates to treatment by a Podiatrist the treating podiatrist will be informed. If the complaint involves any other member of staff, the staff member will be informed

The complainant will be contacted by a manager to discuss the complaint to clarify the problem and will work to reach a good resolution. Depending on the nature of the complaint, a meeting may be offered in person if this is required.

Depending on the complexity of the problem we will suggest a timeframe for resolution. An update on the complaint is required as soon and within 28 days if the complaint is not resolved at an earlier opportunity in full. The response will be provided verbally, and maybe be followed up with a written response depending on the nature of the complaint.

Any learning points and themes identified from complaints which are important for the whole team will be provided in staff meetings, as we strive to continually improvement our services.

Procedure detail

Finding the cause of the complaint:

Our staff will clarify the concern of the patient listening carefully and taking appropriate notes. If necessary, the use of an interpreter will be used. Having listened to the problem and if necessary, the manager will arrange a meeting aiming to resolve the issue as soon as possible by negotiation and discussion.

When reviewing any complaint, the following issues will be addressed:

What happened??

Was there any system, procedure or individual which contributed to the problem?

What have we identified as the main issues?

What measures can be taken to rectify the situation?

What have learnt and what actions can we take to prevent this happening again?

If the complaint involves a member of staff, then time will be taken to speak with the staff member, and understand their perspective. Timely feedback and update to the complainant will be considered?

Resolution:

In most instances a complaint can be resolved when The Foot Stop is approached. An open discussion and explanation are often all that is needed. We aim to be transparent, open and unbiased and to use language that is easily understood.

Our complaints management policy incorporates all aspects of the complaints process from the initial lodgement of the complaint through to the best pathway for the complaint resolution.

If a resolution cannot be found the complaint maybe referred to The Office of the Health Ombudsman Queensland (OHO). Please see [Homepage - Office of the Health Ombudsman \(oho.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.oho.qld.gov.au) for details of how they can support with complaint resolution.

In case of NDIS participants, if the complainant is not satisfied then the complaint can be escalated to the NDIS commission. This can be made by:

- Phoning 1800035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 113 677. Interpreters can be arranged
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544

6. Quality Improvements and future benefits:

In our practice part of the process for receiving and responding to feedback and complaints is to record the complaint on the complaint register and collate any feedback to identify learning points and themes. Complaints will be used as scenario-based learning and feedback will be provided at staff meetings.

7. References:

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission www.ndis.gov.au E: complaints@ndiscommission.gov.au P: 1800 035 544 or post to: Assistant Director, Quality Assurance, NDIS

Commission, PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2750

The Office of the Health Ombudsman: P: 133646 www.oho.qld.gov.au

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health care (ACSQHC)
www.safetyandquality.gov.au

Australian Health Regulation Agency: www.ahpra.gov.au P: 1300 419 495
NRS:1300 419 495

Podiatry Council of NSW: www.podiatrycouncil.nsw.gov.au P: 1300 197 177

Australian Podiatry Association (APODA) www.podiatry.org.au P: 03 9416
3111 *or post to:*

89 Nicholson Street, Brunswick East, Victoria 3057

Foot Health Australia: www.foothealthaustralia.org.au E:
info@podiatry.org.au