

	Policy
	Policy Category: Governance
	Date Created: 20 February 2024
	Policy Name: Complaints Governance Policy

NZDSN's Vision for the future is “an Aotearoa New Zealand where disabled people access the support of their choice, where that support is fully-funded and designed to make a positive difference to their lives.” In order to achieve this Vision, the Board of NZDSN has designed a number of Governance Policies to implement elements of the NZDSN Constitution, our obligations under law and to give effect to the smooth and efficient running of the Board.

The purpose of this governance policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Board when a complaint escalates to Board level.

Position Statement

We aim to be fair and just in our dealings with members, stakeholders and the public so that our reputation is maintained at the highest level.

Issue Outline

Complaints management truly is an essential component of customer service and business success. Not only is it the means to gather valuable member and stakeholder insight, it also helps NZDSN progress to improvements that lead to reduced costs, increased profitability and increased member and stakeholder satisfaction.

Detail

Those in contact with NZDSN are able to voice their opinions without prejudice, have their opinions treated with respect and their complaints dealt with in a systematic and objective manner.

Reprisal actions, whether implied or real, taken by any person as a consequence of a complaint being laid are not condoned.

Framework

Overview

NZDSN is committed to addressing all complaints in a timely, fair, and respectful manner. We acknowledge the right of both members and non-members to raise concerns and will ensure appropriate processes and supports are in place.

2. Complaint Pathways

In the first instance, all complaints should be directed to the CEO for review and investigation.

If the complaint concerns the CEO or cannot be resolved by the CEO, it will be escalated to the Board.

If the complaint is about a Board member, the CEO will involve the Chair at the earliest opportunity.

If the complaint is about the Chair, the CEO will involve the Deputy Chair at the earliest opportunity.

3. How Complaints Can Be Made

Complaints may be submitted in writing (email or letter) or made verbally (in person or by phone).

Complaints can be made directly by the person aggrieved or through a representative (e.g. advocate, family member, support worker).

Where a complaint is made verbally, the CEO will document the nature of the complaint and send a written summary to the complainant for confirmation prior to commencing an investigation.

4. Support for Non-Member Complainants

NZDSN recognises that individuals or organisations who are not members may also raise concerns. Non-member complainants will be:

Provided with information about the complaints process and what to expect.

Offered guidance on where to access independent advocacy or support services (e.g. Health and Disability Advocacy Service, Community Law, or other relevant support agencies).

Informed of their right to have a support person or representative involved throughout the process.

5. Timeframes

Acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 5 working days of receipt.

The investigation and response process will be completed within 20 working days, unless further time is required due to the complexity of the complaint. If more time is needed, the complainant will be notified and kept informed of progress.

Any outcomes or actions resulting from the complaint will be communicated in writing to the complainant.

6. Confidentiality and Reporting

All complaint details, including statements, investigation notes, and correspondence, will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored securely.

A summary of complaints received (excluding identifying information) will be presented to the Board at each meeting for oversight and continuous improvement.

Relevant Background (including legislation/regulation references)

This Governance Policy draws on the NZDSN Constitution available publicly on our website (<https://nzdsn.org.nz/about-us/>)

This policy also connects with the Human Resources Governance Policy and the operational policies on human resource management and complaints management.

Impacts of Policy on Staff, Members, Stakeholders, and Disabled People and their Families

People need to have confidence that NZDSN treats their concerns seriously and that the Association will respond appropriately in every instance.

Alignment with our Service Values

This policy aligns with the value of fairness and just in our actions. This policy also has a direct connection to NZDSN's reputation in the sector, and as such must be treated very seriously.

Implications and/or Risks

Non-compliance with this policy increases the risk of disputes involving staff and external stakeholders. This, in turn, will impact on NZDSN's reputation in the marketplace.

Implementation

This policy is part of the induction for new Board members and is drawn upon for the induction of new staff.

Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

Authorised:	Debbie Hughes, CEO
Date:	28 May 2025
Review Date:	28 May 2027
Consultation Undertaken:	Board Members and staff