



## **Complaints and Appeals Management Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy governs the actions of Assured Auditing when a complaint or appeal regarding staff, or services it provides is received. Assured Auditing will respond and act confidentially, professionally and responsibly in the management of general complaints regarding staff, services or products it provides.

### **Scope**

This document will be supported by all Assured Auditing staff including contractors.

### **Policy/Procedure**

#### **What is a complaint v an appeal?**

For the purpose of this policy:

- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organisation to Assured Auditing, relating to the activities of Assured Auditing, where a response is expected.
- An appeal is a request by a Provider to Assured Auditing for reconsideration of a decision it has made relating to that Provider's certification.

#### **Receipt of a Complaint or Appeal**

A complaint/appeal can be made in several ways:

- In the event that the Provider is dissatisfied with the services provided by Assured Auditing, or wishes to make a complaint, appeal a decision, or provide feedback, the Provider can contact management directly on 02 9412 2110 or by email at [operations@assuredauditing.com.au](mailto:operations@assuredauditing.com.au).
- Providers can discuss their complaint/appeal or feedback with any member of the office or auditing team who will escalate it according to the processes below.

Where possible, a staff member should seek to obtain key information about the complaint or appeal including, but not limited to:

- The name and contact details of the person making the complaint or appeal (and their role);
- The nature of the complaint or appeal – specifically, whether it is:

- a general complaint about Assured Auditing services, and/or
- allegation of non-conformance with audit
- The relevant date of occurrence;
- The action/resolution the complainant or appellant is seeking;
- Whether the complainant or appellant wants the complaint to remain confidential;

### **Complaints Handling Process:**

The General Manager or delegate will be informed, and will;

- Document the complaint or appeal into the Complaints Register (Centro Assist)
- Acknowledge any complaint or appeal within 24hrs of receipt initially by phone if possible and then in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their complaint or appeal to JAS-ANZ/ACIS/NDIS Commission as appropriate
- Ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client will not be used by Assured Auditing to review or approve the resolution of a complaint for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment

All complaints received will be acted on (following the procedures above) within three days of receipt of the complaint.

The decision resolving the complaint shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the activities related to the complaint, in the first instance being the General Manager or delegate.

Assured Auditing will ensure the complainant is kept informed of progress in resolving the complaint during the investigation process and potential actions, and whenever possible, shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant.

Any complaint outcome which is not satisfactory to the complainant can be escalated and referred directly to the General Manager for final resolution, thereby falling under the appeal management process.

For HSQF, Assured Auditing shall notify the QGSA within 48 hours if a complaint is raised or an appeal is lodged by an organisation as a result of an audit or certification decision.

### **Significant complaints made by the Commissioner or other interested parties**

Assured Auditing will notify JAS-ANZ of any significant complaints, whether investigated or not, made by the Commissioner or other interested parties, in relation to the performance of Assured Auditing or the performance of an NDIS provider certified by Assured Auditing.

### **Certification Appeals Process**

The Appeals process will only be implemented after significant effort has been made by Assured Auditing and the organisation to resolve the matter.

Appeals will be resolved within 4 weeks post notification ensuring that the appellant is kept informed throughout the process and final resolution provided in writing.

All appeals will be directed initially to the General Manager or delegate. Upon receipt of an appeal, the General Manager or delegate shall:

- Acknowledge the appeal (by phone, and in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their appeal to JAS-ANZ)
- Register the appeal in the Complaints Management Register (Centro Assist)
- Advise the Audit Team Leader involved
- Appoint an independent technical expert (usually the External Risk Committee) to coordinate and manage the process as required
- The General Manager shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal to be provided to the External Risk Committee for consideration
- The General Manager shall provide the appellant with progress reports, formal notice of the outcome and formal notice of the end of the appeal process.

Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The appeals-handling process includes the following elements and methods:

- An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions need to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals

- Tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them
- Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken

The decision to be communicated to the appellant will be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.

Assured Auditing will take any subsequent action needed to resolve the appeal.

### Escalation Process

If a Provider is dissatisfied with Assured Auditing's complaints handling process, the Provider can contact the relevant body:

(NDIS/ACIS)	JASANZ	1800 805 154
(NDIS)	NDIS Commission	1800 035 544
(ACIS)	ACIA	<a href="mailto:contact@acia.net.au">contact@acia.net.au</a>
HSQF	HSQF Operations team	<a href="mailto:hsqf@qld.gov.au">hsqf@qld.gov.au</a>

### Aged Complaints – referral to JASANZ where relevant

Should a complaint not have been resolved within three months of the date of complaint (aged complaints) it is to be transferred to JASANZ and the complainant/appellant advised accordingly;

Aged complaints are to be referred to JASANZ as follows:

- Original complaint;
- Records of the review of the complaint;
- Response to the complainant;
- Any other records that inform the background to the complaint.

JASANZ may at its discretion deal with any complaint that is referred to it at the level of the secretariat, the Accreditation Review Board or, if the matter is sufficiently grave, the Governing Board.

Failure to refer an aged complaint would result in a major nonconformity on the part of Assured Auditing. Suspension of accreditation may apply to any accredited body which:

- Fails to maintain a complaints system;
- Suppresses or conceals records of complaints;
- Fails to abide by any direction arising from a valid referred complaint.

**Responsibility**

All actions regarding complaints/appeals are to be recorded by the Operations Manager in the *Assured Auditing Complaints Register* (Centro Assist).