



# Department of Communities and Justice

Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care  
How we manage complaints



Easy Read

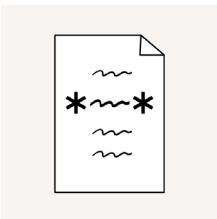
# About Easy Read



This is an Easy Read book.



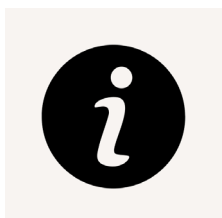
Easy Read uses simple words and pictures to explain ideas.



New words are **\*bold with stars\***.



We tell you what new words mean.



Easy Read is a summary.

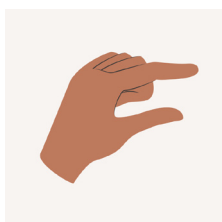
Get the full Framework as a PDF here

<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/children-and-families/child-and-family-system-reform/complaint-management-policy-framework-child-protection-and-out-of-home-care.pdf>

# Who made this book?



This book is by the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice.



The Department of Communities and Justice is called **DCJ** for short.

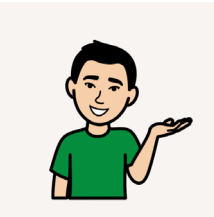


When you see the word **we** it means DCJ.

# About this book



This book is about our  
**\*DCJ Complaint Management Policy Framework  
for Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care\***.

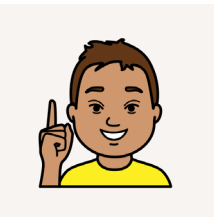


We call it **our Framework** in this book.

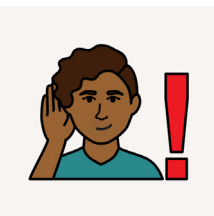


This book explains

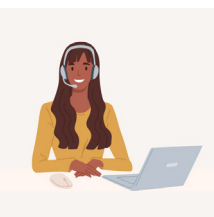
- what our Framework is



- why we made our Framework



- complaints we manage



- how we manage complaints.

# What is our Framework?



Our Framework is a document that helps us manage complaints in a way that is

- fair

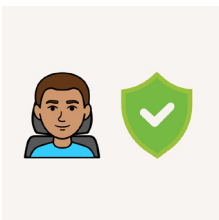


- safe.

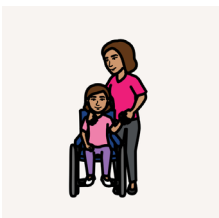


We follow our Framework to help people

- with complaints about **\*out-of-home care\***



- with complaints about **\*child protection\***.



Out-of-home care means the child or young person must live away from home to be safe.



Child protection includes government services that keep children away from harm.

# Why did we create our Framework?



We created our Framework so that

- the community knows what to expect

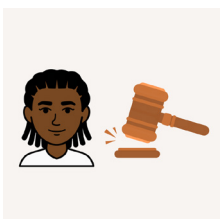


- DCJ workers give fair and safe services.

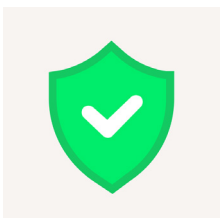


Our Framework helps us

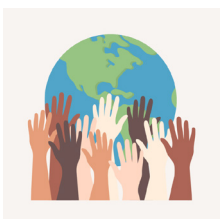
- follow the law



- protect children and young people's rights



- give good services



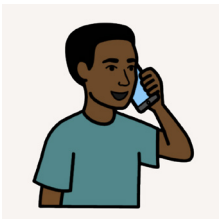
- respect different cultures when we work.

# Understanding complaints

## What is a complaint?

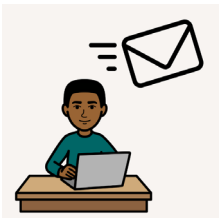


A **\*complaint\*** means you say you are not happy with a service.

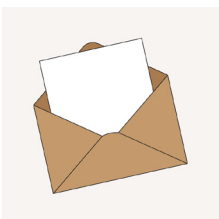


Complaints can be made

- on the phone



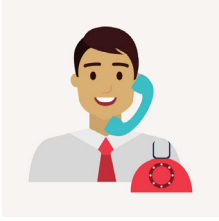
- by email



- by post



- in person.

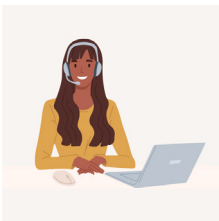


Complaints can be about

- DCJ workers



- services paid for by DCJ



- how we treat you



- how we deal with a issue or case



- long wait times



- **\*policy or process\***.



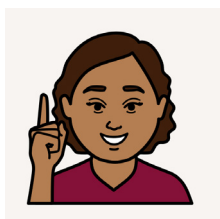
Policy or process includes the rules we follow when we work.

# Feeling safe to make a complaint

## DCJ can help



If you do not feel safe making a complaint to a service directly, you can complain to DCJ.

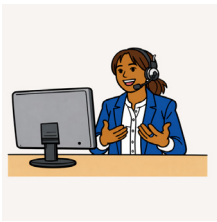


We can look into it.

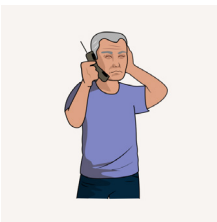
## Outside services can help



You can also complain to an organisation outside of DCJ.



For example, the NSW Ombudsman checks that government services act fairly.



You can contact them if you are

- not happy with our decision

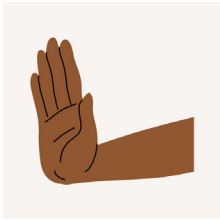


- worried about how we handled your complaint.

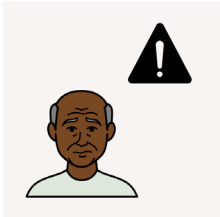


We can give you their contact details.

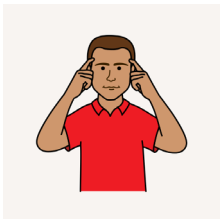
# What is not a complaint?



Some things are **not** complaints.



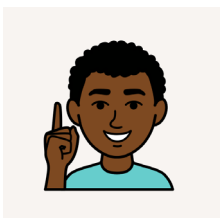
For example, it is not a complaint if you tell us you are worried about the safety of a child.



**\*Opinions\*** are not complaints.



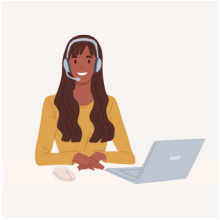
Opinions mean you share your thoughts but you do not ask for help to handle the issue.



It is not a complaint if you ask for updates or more information about a service.



Telling us you have not heard back when you try to contact us **1 time** is not a complaint.



But you can complain if you tried to contact us **more than 1 time** and did not hear back.

# Who can make a complaint?

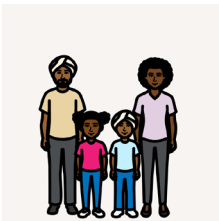


Complaints might be from

- children



- young people



- family members



- caregivers and support people



- an **\*advocate\***.



An advocate can be a person or group who stands up for the rights of others.

# How we manage complaints

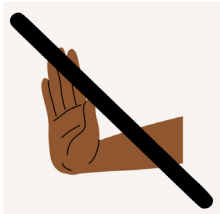
## We follow 11 rules to manage complaints



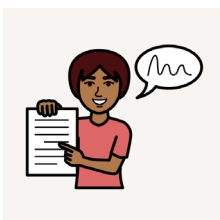
1 We show respect.



2 We make information easy to find and use.



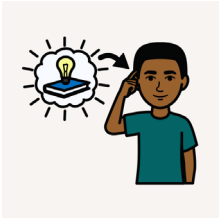
3 We look at every complaint.  
We do not turn people away.



4 If you make a complaint, we explain things clearly and keep you up to date.



- 5 We make sure you get the right help. For example, we use expert staff for bigger issues.



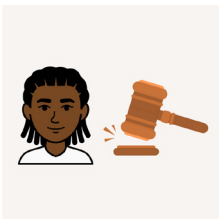
- 6 We make it easy for you to understand how we work and why we make decisions.



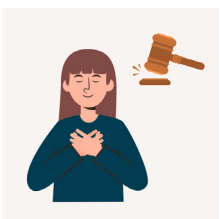
- 7 We work as quickly as possible.



- 8 We respect different cultures.



- 9 We follow laws to keep children and young people safe.

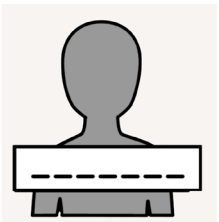


- 10 We respect everyone's right to make a complaint.



- 11 We try to be better all the time.  
For example, we learn from our past work and aim to do better next time.

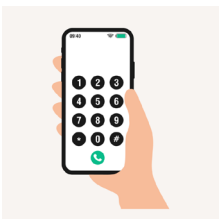
## We listen to anonymous complaints



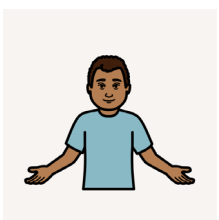
We listen to **\*anonymous\*** complaints.



Anonymous means you do not tell us who you are. For example, we do not know your name.



It helps if we have at least 1 type of contact method for anonymous complaints.

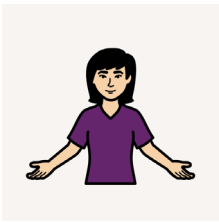


We respect all complaints, including complaints from anonymous people.

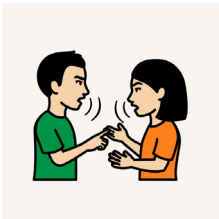
# You will not get in trouble



You have the right to make a complaint.



Nothing bad will happen to you if you make a complaint.

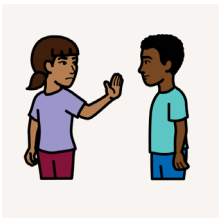


We will **not**

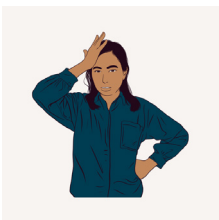
- treat you badly



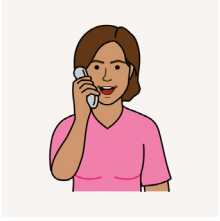
- stop your services



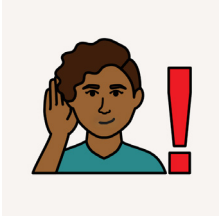
- ignore you



- make things harder for you.



Tell us if someone treats you badly because you made a complaint.



We will take this seriously.

# We follow 7 steps to manage complaints



- 1 We tell you when we get your complaint so that you know we are looking at it.



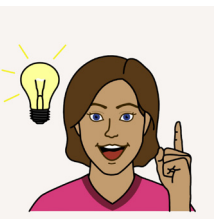
- 2 We **\*assess\*** your complaint.  
Assess means we decide how urgent it is.



- 3 We decide what to do next.



- 4 We **\*investigate\***. Investigate means we get more information about what happened.



- 5 We **\*resolve\***. Resolve means we decide how to deal with the issue.

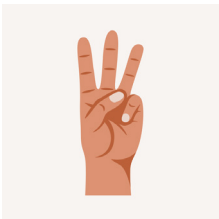


- 6 We write down what happened so the information is safe for later if we need it.

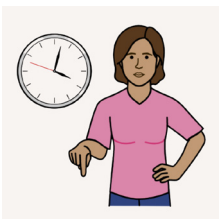


- 7 We close the complaint and make sure you know how it was managed.

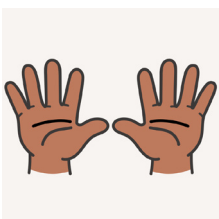
## How much time do we need?



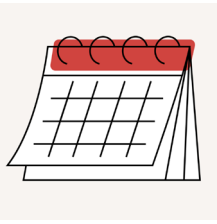
- In **3 business days** we tell you we have got your complaint and we will start to look into it.



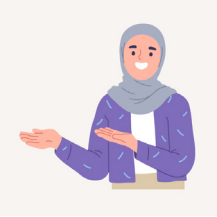
- We try to fix the issue straight away if it is simple.



- We aim for **10 business days** for urgent complaints that are not managed right away.



Sometimes we need more time if the complaint is about a bigger issue.



If we need more time

- we will tell you why it will take longer



- we will give you updates over time so that you know what is happening.

# Sharing information about your complaint

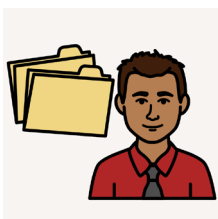


We follow laws

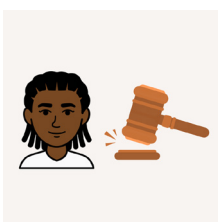
- to keep personal details like your name or address private and safe



- to manage information about the complaint safely.



Sometimes we cannot tell you all of the details when we finish dealing with a complaint.



The laws we follow are used to keep children and young people safe.

# Keeping DCJ workers safe



We have rules to keep DCJ workers safe from unfair treatment.



It is OK to

- feel upset



- feel angry



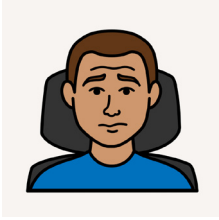
- disagree with us



- ask questions



- share lots of information.

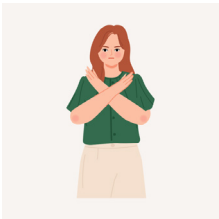


We understand complaints can be stressful.

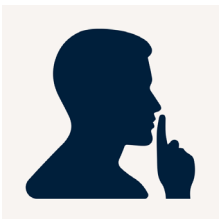


People who have complaints **cannot**

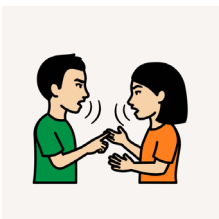
- bring up the same complaint over and over after it is closed



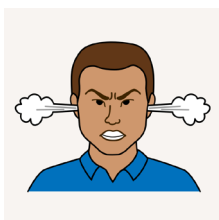
- ask for things we cannot do, like fix all issues straight away



- be unhelpful, for example, not share details we need to do our work



- try to argue with DCJ workers



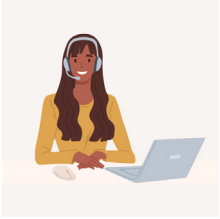
- yell or scare DCJ workers



- be unsafe.



We have a right to change how we work with you if we feel unsafe.

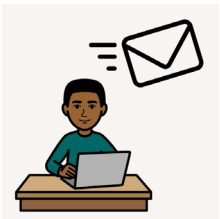


For example, we might

- change your DCJ contact person



- ask to stop a phone call



- use emails instead



- mail a letter instead



- stop helping if it is not safe.

# We will check our work



We will check our work over time.



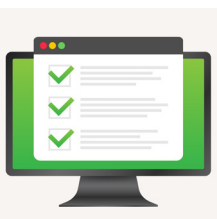
We want to know what works well for the people we have helped.



We want to find out ways we can do better.



We will listen to ideas from children and young people to learn how we can do better.



We will write reports and share helpful information to keep everyone up to date.

# You can ask for a review



You can ask for a **\*review\*** if you are not happy with how we handled your complaint.



A review means we look at it again.



A senior worker who was not involved before will do this review.



We can explain

- how to ask for a review



- who to contact for a review.

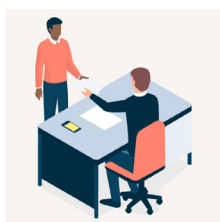
# How to make a complaint

## DCJ Community Services Centre

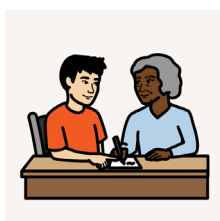


Find more information here

[www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/csc.html](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/csc.html)



**\*Community Services Centres\***  
are local offices.



Other departments might ask a local office to help manage a complaint.



People who use our services can also make their own complaint to a local office.

# Enquiry, Feedback and Complaints Unit



**\*Enquiry, Feedback and Complaints Unit\***  
is our main centre for handling complaints.



Web [www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-and-feedback](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-and-feedback)



Email [complaints@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dcj.nsw.gov.au)



Call 1800 000 164

# Contract managers



**\*Contract managers\*** also manage complaints.



Contract managers are DCJ workers who work with outside services for children and young people.

# Help for Aboriginal children, young people and families



If you are Aboriginal, you can ask for **\*cultural support\***.



Cultural supports means you can ask to speak to

- an Aboriginal staff member



- an Aboriginal advocate



- an Aboriginal community organisation.

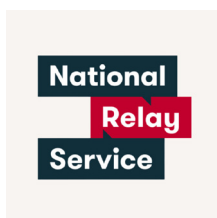


We respect your culture and your connection to family and Country. We will do our best to get this support for you.

# Help to call



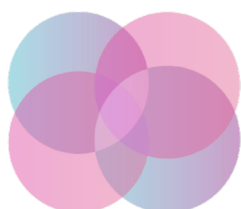
Call 131 450 for the Translating and Interpreting Service if English is not your first language.



Call 1800 555 660 for the National Relay Service if you have communication support needs.



Call 1800 555 677 if you use a teletypewriter or TTY.



Embrace **Access**

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