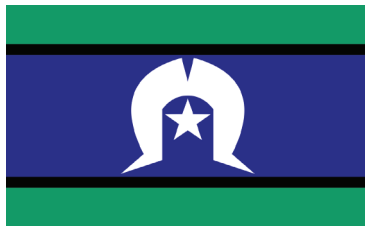


# RESOURCE BOOKLETS for Kinship Carers

## How to make a complaint – and get heard





GPV/KCV acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin nation as the traditional owners of our great land and offers respect to Elders, past and present.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that the Aboriginal culture existed in Australia before European settlement and consisted of many community groups. Further, we acknowledge the Indigenous peoples of this land as the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

GPV/KCV acknowledges that laws and policies of the past have inflicted grief and suffering on our fellow Australians and regrets the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

GPV/KCV believes that a society that is inclusive of all is crucial to individual and community wellbeing and will behave with respect towards all irrespective of their race, religion, sexuality, gender or socio-economic background.

GPV/KCV acknowledges 13th of February as National Apology Day, the anniversary of then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivering the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008. GPV/KCV will take steps that promote a happier and healthier future for Indigenous Australians, particularly the children and young people.

Ph: 0499 969 234

Email: [admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org](mailto:admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

[www.grandparentsvictoria.org.au](http://www.grandparentsvictoria.org.au)

[www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org](http://www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

Key words which influence GPV/KCV approaches are: Truthfulness, Confidentiality, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Constancy, Gratitude, Commitment, Compassion

Kinship Carers Victoria  
acknowledges the support of the  
Victorian government.



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing

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# Kinship Carers VICTORIA

Kinship Carers Victoria  
0499 969 234  
[admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org](mailto:admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org)  
[kinshipcarersvictoria.org](http://kinshipcarersvictoria.org)



<https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/listen-download-podcasts/>

# Part 1

## Feedback, complaints & compliments



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## Feedback, complaints and compliments explained

You have the right to provide feedback, make a complaint or give a compliment about a decision or a situation relating to the care of a child or young person. You can expect that your views and opinions will be taken into consideration and responded to in a way that is:

- transparent
- fair
- accountable
- outcome focused
- respectful.

It is important that you feel confident sharing your concerns with child protection or your agency at any time. This is the best way to prevent issues from becoming a bigger problem or a formal complaint.

### Feedback

Issues arise from time to time that may need urgent or immediate action. These can usually be resolved quickly.

Quick and effective resolution is important to:

- enable you, the department or your agency to focus on caring for the child or young person in your care
- minimise any disruption for the child or young person
- ensure your needs are met, and you receive the appropriate and expected level of support and assistance to perform your role
- prevent the issue from escalating.

### Compliments

Compliments are expressions of praise, encouragement or gratitude about services provided or managed by your agency, child protection or the department. They provide valuable feedback about the level of satisfaction with service delivery.

Compliments should be acknowledged and the person providing the compliment thanked for their feedback. Where possible, the person providing the compliment will be informed how their feedback will be used, and provided with assurance that it will be passed on to relevant staff members.

### Complaints

In the department's Complaints and Compliments Management Policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with any service provided, contracted, funded or regulated by the department. A complaint may also be made about the complaint- handling process of the department.

# How to raise feedback, provide a compliment or make a complaint

A compliment can be provided directly to the child or young person's child protection worker or agency case manager, their line manager or alternatively the department.

The following steps will help you to provide feedback or make a complaint.

## Step 1. Discuss your concerns with the child protection worker

Contact the child or young person's child protection worker to discuss your concerns and to resolve day-to-day issues that require urgent or immediate action. You should do this first before other processes.

If you cannot resolve the issue with the child protection worker, or you are uncomfortable having a discussion with them, contact their manager to try to achieve a resolution.

## Step 2. Register a complaint with the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing

If you are unhappy with how your complaint has been managed by the department, or the issue relates to an action or service provided by the department that cannot be resolved through Step 1, you can submit a complaint to the department's Complaints and Privacy Unit.

To do this, call **1300 884 706**, email [complaints.reception@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:complaints.reception@dffh.vic.gov.au), complete an online complaint form at <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint> or write to:

**Complaints and Privacy Unit**  
**GPO Box 4057**  
**Melbourne VIC 3001**

Alternatively, if you know your department divisional office, you can contact the Performance, Quality and Compliance Team in the department by sending an email to:

[north.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:north.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au) [south.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:south.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au)  
[east.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:east.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au) [west.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:west.feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au)

Complaints received by the department are managed in accordance with the department's Compliments and complaints management policy, which provides important information about how your complaint will be managed, the review and response timeframes, and how your complaint will inform improvements in service delivery. To view this policy, visit <https://dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>.

## Step 3. Register a complaint with the Victorian Ombudsman

The Victorian Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament who investigates complaints about administrative actions taken by Victorian Government agencies and departments.

If you have a complaint about a Victorian Government agency or department, the Victorian Ombudsman may be able to assist you. Before contacting the Victorian Ombudsman, you should attempt to resolve your complaint with the department and your agency if applicable.

To contact the Victorian Ombudsman, call **(03) 9613 6222** or **1800 806 314** toll free (regional areas only), complete an online complaint form at <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/Complaints> or write to:

**Victorian Ombudsman Level 2**  
**570 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000.**

## Register a complaint with your agency

If the child or young person is supported by an agency and your issue is with a service they provide, contact their agency case manager to discuss your concerns. If you cannot resolve the issue with the agency case manager or you are uncomfortable having a discussion with them, contact their line manager to try to resolve the concerns.

If your issue remains unresolved or you are unhappy about a service provided by the agency case manager or their line manager, you can register a complaint with your agency by following their complaints process.

On request, your agency can provide you with a copy of its complaints policy.

If the child or young person is supported by an agency, but the issue is with the department, the agency can raise the issue with the department if required. In most instances, issues will be resolved with your agency without the need for further escalation, including issues that need urgent or immediate action.

If you are not satisfied with the response from the agency, contact the department as outlined in Step 2.

## Requesting a review of case planning decisions by Child Protection

The review process applies to all decisions made by child protection as part of the decision-making process for children and young people involved with Child Protection, including case planning decisions. This does not apply to decisions of a Court, such as court-ordered access arrangements, which must be appealed to a higher court.

A parent, a child or young person, or a person directly affected by a Child Protection decision, who has a significant relationship with the child or young person, may request access to the internal departmental review process.

This can include carers, in some instances, and may involve a review of decisions around care arrangements, contact arrangements, and involvement of other agencies and services with the child or young person.

To request a review of a case planning decision by Child Protection, you should speak to the child or young person's child protection worker or agency case manager or their manager.



## Advocacy, support and information

### Kinship Carers Victoria

Kinship Carers Victoria is the peak body for kinship carers in Victoria, providing independent and confidential advice and support, including how to manage issues or complaints.

To receive advice, support or advocacy from Kinship Carers Victoria, call **0499 969 234** or email [admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org](mailto:admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org)

### The Commission for Children and Young People

The Commission for Children and Young People is not an official complaints or review body. However, they can provide information and assistance to people concerned about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

To contact the Commission for Children and Young People, call **1300 78 29 78** (enquiry line), Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

#### Useful resources

Feedback and complaints to the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing. Call **1300 884 706** or visit <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>

Kinship Carers Victoria <https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/>



# Part 2

# Complaints



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing



## What can you make a complaint about?

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>

You can make a complaint about any service provided by the department or one of its funded service providers. We want our services to work for people who need and use them. We can always do better and we listen to people using our services, their advocates and representatives.

We want to know if:

- You feel a service is unsatisfactory
- You did not receive enough information or choice
- You were denied respect, dignity or privacy.

When handling your complaint we will:

- Provide information that is helpful, accurate, and easy to understand
- Be courteous and considerate in our communication
- Promptly refer requests to the appropriate person
- Respond to your matter within a reasonable time
- Keep you informed of progress or delays.

## How to make a complaint

Take the following steps to get your complaint resolved:

**Step 1.** Discuss your complaint with a staff member, housing officer, your case worker or from the place where you are receiving the service.

**Step 2.** If you have tried to resolve your concerns but you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you can discuss your complaint with a senior manager at the local office.

**Step 3.** If we cannot resolve your complaint at Step 1 or Step 2, you can choose one of the following ways to make a formal complaint to the department:

- **Submit your complaint online** using the **Make a complaint eform**
- **Telephone** the department's Feedback Service on **1300 884 706**
- **Email** the department's Feedback Service via [feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au)
- **Mail: Complaints, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.**



## Anonymous complaints

There are a couple of ways to make an anonymous complaint.

You can make a complaint without disclosing who you are.

You can provide your name and contact details but ask to have your complaint to be marked anonymous. We will not pass your information on to anyone if you do this.

If you make an anonymous complaint, we will not be able to:

- contact you if we need more information
- let you know the outcome of your complaint.

Please let us know if disclosing your name or having us pass on your information worries you.

## Making a complaint for children and young people in out-of-home care

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-complaint-children-and-young-people-out-home-care-care-services>

If you're a child or young person living in out-of-home care and you want to make a complaint, see **Making a complaint for children and young people in out-of-home care**.

If you're a child or young person in care services (which was called out-of-home care), and you are unhappy with your care, you can make a complaint.

### What you can make a complaint about

We want our services to work for children and young people in care services.

Children and young people in care services have the right to feel safe and secure and to tell someone how they feel, including if they are unhappy or have a concern about their care.

The department's complaints team is here to listen you and help you with your concerns.

## Making a Complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman

If you think you've been treated wrongly by a Victorian public organisation, we can see if your problem can be fixed.

### Getting started

You'll need to tell us:

- who your complaint is about
- what you think has been done wrong
- basic personal details

Phone: **1800 806 314**

Telephone Interpreter: **131 450**

Deaf or hearing impaired users: **133 677** then **1800 806 314**

<https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint/>

### Who they can look into

- **Councils** Services, communication, complaint handling, unreasonable actions or decisions
- **Victorian government departments** eg
  - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
  - Department of Education and Training
  - Department of Justice and Community Safety
- **Victorian government organisations** eg
  - WorkSafe Victoria
  - VicRoads
  - Fines Victoria
- **Victorian universities and TAFEs**
- **Publicly funded community services**
  - Those which receive funding from Victorian public organisations to provide services
- **Prisons**
- **Certain professional boards** eg
  - Architects Registration Board of Victoria
  - Victorian Legal Services Board

## **What is the complaint process?**

The Ombudsman deals with most complaints within 30 days. Complaints that are complex can take longer before we make a final decision.

### **Step 1: Tell us what has happened**

We receive your complaint and acknowledge it within 5 business days.

### **Step 2: We look into your complaint**

Many complaints can be fixed by us contacting the relevant organisation.

### **Step 3: We may look into your complaint further**

We'll see if we can resolve your complaint and if not whether we should investigate. We only investigate less than 10% of complaints we receive.

## **Learn more about the investigation process**

### **Step 4: You receive an outcome**

We reach a decision and contact you about the outcome.



Kinship Carers Victoria  
0499 969 234  
[admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org](mailto:admin@kinshipcarersvictoria.org)



Kinship Carers Victoria  
is supported by the Victorian Government.