

CLIENTS

COMPLAINTS

Policy statement

Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. (AVWA) actively supports a client's right to complain about our services. We consider a complaint to have occurred when:
a client, or their advocate, tells us that they are unhappy or dissatisfied with;

- a decision we have made
- the services we provide
- the environment we provide services in
- the way we provide services
- the staff/volunteers who work in our organisation and
- the client wishes the organisation to acknowledge and respond to their complaint

Complaints about our service, or access to our service, will be dealt with promptly, fairly, confidentially and without retribution.

Our complaints procedures will give clients access to a fair and equitable process for dealing with complaints and disputes.

Complaints are an important source of client feedback and play a valuable role in the ongoing improvement of our services. Therefore, complaints will be welcomed and organisation policy, procedure and practices will be adjusted to respond to complaints where appropriate.

The complaints procedure and a client's right to use an advocate will be explained to a client, both verbally and in writing, as part of their orientation when they commence services.

Clients will also be informed about the complaints procedure if they are refused service at any time. When making a complaint, all clients have a right to use an advocate of their choice. This may be a family member or friend, or an outside organisation.

When a complaint is received, the staff member who first receives the complaint will determine whether the complaint is serious or routine using the following criteria:

Serious complaints involve matters that, from the client's perspective, concern: Staff or volunteer conduct

An alleged breach of

- a client's right or responsibility
- duty of care
- client/staff safety
- client privacy and confidentiality
- An alleged incident of harassment

Routine complaints include matters that involve operational issues such as:

- Food
- Activities
- Transport arrangements

If a volunteer receives a complaint they should refer the matter to their immediate supervisor. The supervisor should determine the level of the complaint and document the complaint.

Serious Complaints

The designated senior management member, will be informed of all serious complaints within 24hrs. The senior staff will contact the client verbally within 24 hours of being notified of a serious complaint. The said staff will also acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days of being notified of the complaint. The senior management member will investigate complaint-keeping records on the client complaint form. After attempting to resolve the complaint with the client, the responsible staff will write to the client outlining any decisions reached and/or any actions the organisation has taken, or will take, in response to the complaint. This written notification will occur within 10 working days of the complaint acknowledgement letter being sent. If clients are dissatisfied with the way the organisation has responded they will be reminded that they are entitled to take the matter further, as per complaints procedure.

Minor Complaints

The staff member receiving the complaint will acknowledge the complaint verbally and attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the client. If any policy or operational changes are required, the staff member will discuss the matter with the program coordinator. The staff member receiving this complaint will respond verbally to the client within 5 working days of the complaint being received outlining any actions or decisions that have been taken. If clients are dissatisfied with the way the organisation has responded, they will be reminded that they are entitled to take the matter further, as per the complaints procedure.

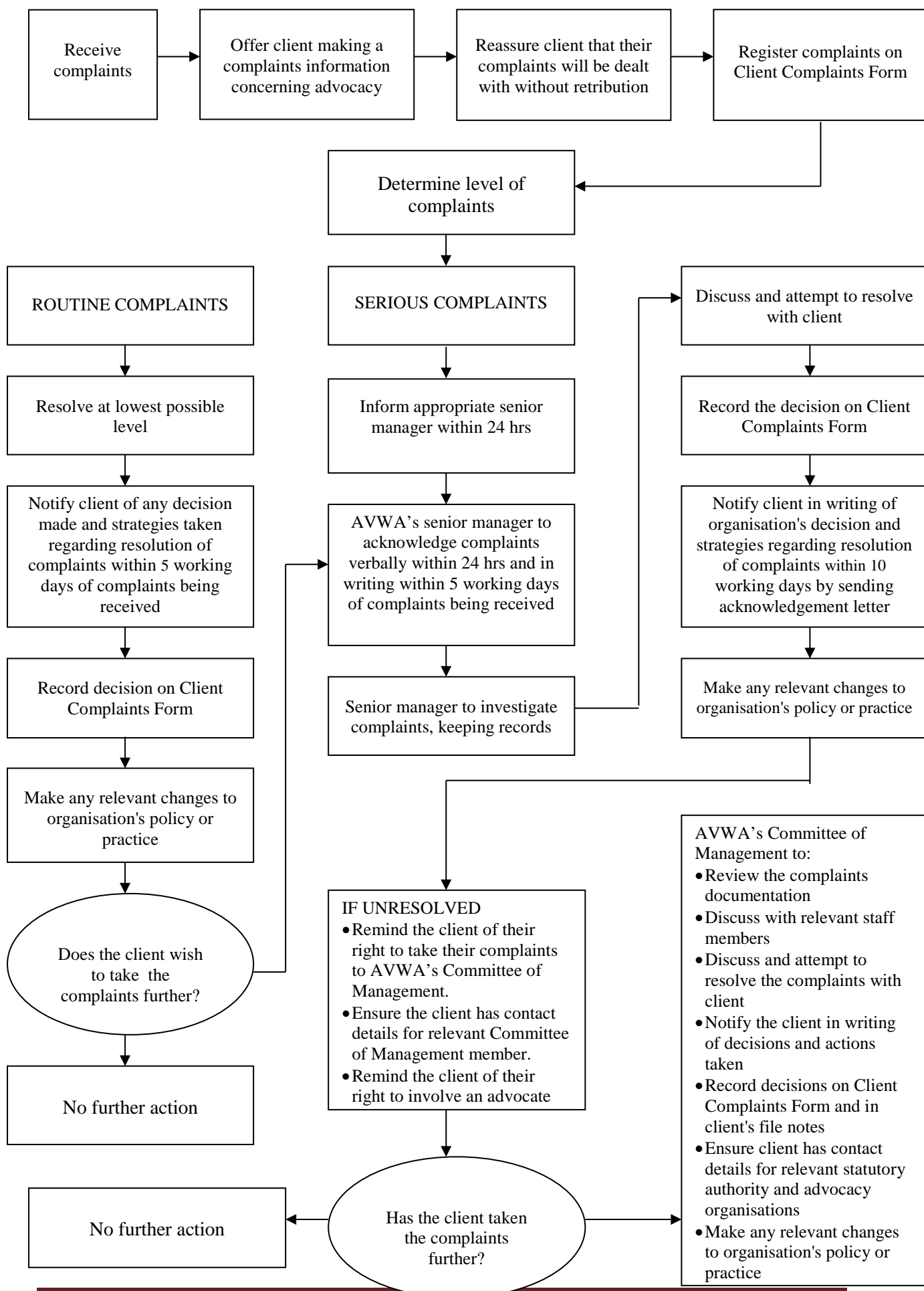
Should a complaint reach the Committee of Management (CoM), a designated member of the CoM will review the situation by discussing the matter with both client and staff. The CoM will formally respond to the client after the next scheduled CoM meeting.

When a complaint is received, the staff member to whom the initial complaint is made will fill out a Client Complaint Form. The form will be kept in a complaints register, which will be kept by the designated officer.

The designated officer will review the complaints register every 3 months to ensure that complaints have been responded to promptly, fairly and appropriately and that appropriate policy and procedural changes have been made.

PROCEDURE CLIENT COMPLAINTS

To ensure consistency in the handling of client complaints AVWA will acknowledge and respond to each client complaint



Authorised by: Chief Executive Officer
June 2017

Policy Control	
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Approval authority	CEO