

Complaints Processes in Tasmania

The right to 'have a say' includes having the knowledge, confidence, and support to be able to make a complaint if and when needed.

CREATE asked 25 young people with a care experience aged 12 - 18 in Tasmania about making a complaint and what helps and hinders their participation in this process.

88%

of young people said there was someone they could talk with if they were feeling unhappy with an aspect of their life in care.

Most frequently, young people said they could talk to their carers, caseworkers, and friends.

40%

of young people rated that they were "very or quite likely" to make a complaint.

One third

were "somewhat unlikely" to raise a complaint.

“

[I] called the house manager – 100% listened to it – opened up his ears and acted on it straight away. He told me that the worker was fired. (Young person, 17)

I'm not in a situation where I need to. I didn't really know I could complain about stuff. (Young person, 17)

Because I don't really like complaining. [I feel] shy and unsure. (Young person, 17)

I'd tell my case manager. I'd explain what the problem was and ask what they can do about it. (Young person, 13)

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Key Messages

Young people wanted:

- complaints processes that were easy, safe, quick, independent, and accessible
- options on ways to make a complaint (e.g., online form; face-to-face; a call back)
- information that was clear, detailed, and child-friendly that included:
 - their rights
 - how to complain
 - who they could complain to
 - what to expect
- regular conversations with caseworkers who use good communications skills
- support when making a complaint and throughout the complaints process.

Barriers to making a complaint included:

- not knowing they could make a complaint
- not thinking anything would change
- feeling worried about the consequences of complaining
- not feeling heard
- feeling shy or unsure.

“The caseworker should ask young people if they need to complain. They should ask them this often, not just once. (Young person, 13)

Make it known that kids are allowed to complain. Make sure young people know how to make a complaint – they should provide multiple ways to make a complaint. (Young person, 17)

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Actions

Communities Tasmania aims to implement a best practice complaints management system that is child and young person friendly over the next three years (see *Striving for Practice Excellence: Our Strategic Direction 2021-2024*). In this context, it is recommended that Communities Tasmania:

- Ensures that a youth advisory group is working with Communities Tasmania and involved in co-designing the complaints management system.
- Integrates principles from CREATE's Child-Centred Best Practice Guide, which was informed by the voices of young people and is consistent with the experiences of young people in this consultation and other best practice guides.
- Ensures there is capacity to monitor and evaluate the new complaints system over time. This includes having clear, specific, and measurable indicators assessing the experiences of young people and their level of satisfaction with processes.
- Ensures there are transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Consultation
completed in 2022

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