

Speak Up and Speak Out

Complaints Systems Report

Young People's Summary



I am Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People.

As a part of my role, I must listen to children and young people about their worries and their ideas to help them be happy, healthy and safe.

Sometimes, children and young people tell places like schools, hospitals or child protection - when something is wrong, they feel unsafe or need help. This is called making a complaint.

My job is to:

- Listen to what you say when something isn't going right or you're not being treated fairly.
- Check how services (like schools and hospitals) handle complaints from children and young people.
- Make sure they are listening to you, taking your complaint seriously, and then I speak up if they need to do better.

To help me do this, my team and I:

- Talk to children and young people to hear about your experiences speaking up and raising complaints.
- Ask government services and organisations to tell us how they support children and young people to make complaints.
- Look at trends in complaints by children and young people so that we can better advocate for the things that matter most to you.

I use what I have learnt to help services and organisations listen better and support children and young people when they speak up and make a complaint.



What is important for children and young people?

I asked children and young people what they think makes a good complaints system - and lots of you shared your ideas with my team and I.

Here's what you told us:

You should feel safe when making a complaint - no one should get you in trouble for it and you should not feel scared that someone will get back at you.

You should get updates – so you know what's happening with your complaint.

It should be easy to complain - there should be clear, simple steps and different ways to do it - like online, talking to someone, or writing it down.

Adults should really listen - your complaint should be taken seriously and followed up properly.

You should feel confident to speak up - your voice matters and you should feel brave and be supported.

Your information should stay private and only be shared with the right people.

It should be fair and helpful – it's not about blaming people, but about working together to fix problems and make things better together.

Children and young people want a system that listens, takes action, and helps make things better for everyone.

What will happen next?

I have written a report to government to tell them what we found out and share your ideas on how they can make it easier for children and young people to speak up.

I will share your feedback to services and organisations that work with kids so they can make their complaints systems better for children and young people.

I will be working closely with the government so children and young people can feel safe and supported when they want to make a complaint.

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