

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR)

How to Make a Complaint

Family Relationship Service

For questions, support, or to make a complaint, contact us:

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How to Make a Complaint About Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Services

At Mallee Family Care (MFC), we aim to provide the highest quality family dispute resolution services. If you're unhappy with any part of the service, you have the right to make a complaint. This guide explains how to do that and what will happen next.

1. When Can You Make a Complaint?

You can make a complaint:

- **At any time** during the FDR service
- Or **up to 12 months after** the service ends
- In exceptional cases, the CEO may accept complaints **after this period**

2. How to Make a Complaint

You can raise your concerns directly with:

- The **FDR practitioner (FDRP)**, or
- Their **team leader or manager**

If you're not satisfied with their response, you can make a formal complaint to MFC.

You can do this:

- **In writing** – by email, letter, or using an online form
- **Verbally** – in person or over the phone

Please include:

- Your name and contact details
- Details about your FDR session
- What the complaint is about
- The outcome you're hoping for

3. What Happens Next

Acknowledgement (Within 5 Working Days)

You'll receive a written acknowledgment (email or letter) within 5 working days, confirming we've received your complaint.

Assessment (Within 10 Working Days)

We'll assess your complaint within 10 working days and contact you to explain the next steps. Some complaints may be resolved quickly, while others may require a formal investigation.

Investigation (Up to 28 Days or More Depending on Complexity)

- Investigations will be carried out promptly, though more complex matters may take longer (up to **28 working days** or more).
- We may need to speak with multiple parties.
- You'll be kept updated throughout via your preferred method (email, letter, or phone).

4. Who Will Handle Your Complaint?

We manage complaints across three internal levels:

Level 1: FDRP or their Team Leader (attempt to resolve informally)

Level 2: Program Manager

Level 3: Executive General Manager (EGM)

If unresolved at one level, the complaint is passed to the next. We'll ensure the person handling your complaint has no conflict of interest.

5. What Outcomes Are Possible?

If your complaint is upheld, we may:

- Offer an apology
- Provide further support or staff training
- Make improvements to our service

If the complaint is not upheld, we'll explain the reasons for this decision.

You will be informed of the outcome via your preferred method (phone, email, or letter).

6. What If You're Still Not Happy?

If you're dissatisfied with the outcome:

- You can request a review by contacting MFC within 28 days
- If you're still not satisfied after our internal process (including all 3 levels), you can request an external review

7. External Review Process

If a matter remains unresolved after internal review, it may be referred for external investigation.

MFC hold a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with an **Independent third party**

- Executive Manager or CEO may refer the matter for external investigation
- The independent reviewer will consider whether the Family Law Act or FDR Regulations have been breached
- This external process may take up to **28 days**

8. We Close the Complaint and Record What Happened

Once the process is complete:

- You'll be informed in writing that your complaint is closed
- We'll record the outcome to help improve our services

Still Have Concerns or Need Help?

If you're not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact MFC for a review. If you're still unhappy, you may escalate your complaint to an external body.