

Gowrie

INCLUSION AGENCY TASMANIA



From Inclusion Agency Tasmania

Inclusion recognises the right of every child to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life. Inclusion happens when children are viewed as capable and valued contributors with a particular focus on acknowledging each child's unique strengths and interests. In this edition of Inclusion News, we look at Early Childhood Australia's *Statement on the inclusion of every child in early childhood education and care*. This statement discusses aspects involved with and contributing to inclusive practices within early childhood settings. Also included is several reflective questions and an infographic which explores the benefits of inclusion.

The role of an additional educator is always a topic of discussion within services. We have included information relating to this and further links to the Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM) . The additional educator role is to decrease the ratio within care environments, providing the whole educator team with opportunities to implement actions identified when working with their Inclusion Professional.

As an agency we welcome feedback from the sector in regard to the service that we are providing. Within this newsletter you will find information on our feedback handling strategy. In the coming weeks we will be sending out a quality of service survey which we would be appreciative if services could complete. The surveys are anonymous, only reflecting regions so any region trends can be determined.

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Acknowledgement



Inclusion Agency Tasmania acknowledges with deep respect the Traditional Custodians of the lands over which we work. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging and recognise the continuing connection and contribution the palawa peoples make to this land, the water ways and our communities.

Statement of the inclusion of every child in early childhood education and care

Sourced 19/11/2021 <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Statement-of-Inclusion-2016.pdf>

What creates inclusion?

Inclusion ensures that all children participate meaningfully while learning and interacting in programs that acknowledge each child's strengths and interests, so that they are supported to be active members of their community. It has three dimensions:

- **Access:** Inclusion means ensuring that every child has access to early learning. Inclusive access requires early learning services to be set up and organised around a diverse community. Systemic barriers, service barriers and individual barriers must be overcome to enable inclusive access.
- **Participation:** Inclusion requires meaningful participation. Inclusive early childhood education and care provides programs in which children are recognised as active agents in their own learning. Meaningful participation is grounded in the overarching concepts of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF): belonging, being and becoming.
- **Outcomes:** Inclusive early childhood education and care means that every child experiences positive learning outcomes in the areas identified in the EYLF, namely that they have a strong sense of identity; are connected with and contribute to their world; have a strong sense of wellbeing; are confident and involved learners; and are effective communicators.

Why Inclusion?

Inclusion is important for many reasons. It implements current thinking about child development; supports children's rights; implements the legal standards for early childhood education and care; and is good professional practice. Inclusion fosters diversity and overcomes any barriers that might exist to ensure that every child experiences quality early childhood education and care.

Inclusion implements current thinking about child development. It reflects influential human development theory, particularly in early childhood. It recognises the positive and diverse influences on children's development that provide a foundation for inclusion. An ecological systems approach to childhood development states that cultural context—including socioeconomic status, poverty and ethnicity—affects a child's experience, strengths and needs. Thus effective education and care must recognise and be responsive within this context. Early learning without inclusion will be ineffective in meeting the different development needs of all children. Evidence shows that inclusive practice benefits all children in early learning.

Inclusion supports children's rights. Every child should be valued as an individual and as a contributing member of their family, community and society. Consistent with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, inclusive practice in early childhood education and care ensures that every child has access to education 'irrespective of ... race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status'

Inclusive practices are also important to the fulfilment of other international conventions, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Under the EYLF, high-quality practice occurs when educators deliver an exciting and flexible learning environment that is responsive to the interests and abilities of all children. It also caters for different learning capacities and learning styles, and invites children and families to participate actively in the planning and implementation of the curriculum.

Inclusion means building upon and fostering diversity. It involves working with every child and not particular groups of children. Each child's strengths are built upon, and any barriers to learning facing a child are recognised and

responded to. Inclusion seeks to address circumstances where some children may be excluded, under-represented, or are unable to access early childhood education and care.

Children who may require or benefit from additional supports or adaptations to participate fully and be included in early years services are:

- children with disability or developmental delay
- children experiencing physical, medical or mental health conditions
- Aboriginal children
- Torres Strait Islander children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- refugees
- gender-diverse or gender-fluid children, and children from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) families
- children with complex social, emotional or behavioural needs
- children who are gifted
- children experiencing social, economic or geographic disadvantage
- children at risk of abuse, neglect or family violence
- children in institutional settings, including residential care, refuges, hospitals or migration detention.

Early childhood education and care professionals

The work of early childhood education and care professionals is fundamental to the achievement of inclusion of every child in early learning. This involves holding and expressing inclusive values, fostering strong relationships with children, collaboration, inclusive practice and strong and ongoing professional development.

Values

- Leaders at all levels in the sector work to build positive attitudes, beliefs and values about inclusion in their professional communities.
- Early childhood education and care professionals understand and express inclusive values in their daily practice and when interacting with families.
- Leaders and all early childhood education and care professionals commit to addressing attitudes that can be barriers to inclusion.

Relationships with children are strong

- Children's complex relationships are acknowledged and respected, and educators are considerate of alternative perspectives and social inclusion.
- Children are actively supported and included in play; professionals help children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community.



Collaboration

- Inclusion of all children requires early childhood education and care professionals to work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children.
- Educators and care professionals work together to share knowledge, common language and daily practices that support inclusion.
- Family members are recognised as collaborative partners in their child's learning, and respected as informed decision-makers in supporting their child's ongoing education and care

Practice

- Educators engage in professional practice that focuses on:
 - » the child as a contributor to their own learning and that of their peers
 - » adapting curriculum and program practices and providing additional resources that respond to each child and family's strengths, interests and individuality.
- Educators provide support for effective and positive transitions between and across settings for children and families
- Educators recognise and respond to barriers preventing children from achieving educational success. They challenge practices that contribute to inequities and make curriculum decisions that promote inclusion and participation for each child.

Professional Development

- Education and care professionals commit to continuing professional development that supports inclusive practices, including joint professional learning with inclusion and early intervention experts.
- Educators and inclusion support professionals develop an understanding of the social challenges faced by particular groups of children, and the role of professionals in promoting positive attitudes to diversity and inclusion.

ECA encourages every stakeholder to take steps towards implementing the actions outlined in this statement.

ECA recognises that best practice is always evolving, and we welcome feedback on this statement.

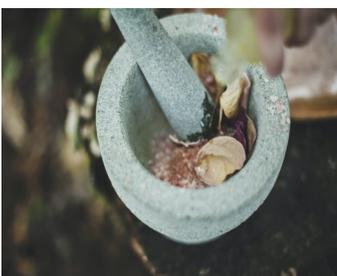


[Full Statement](#)

Reflective questions for inclusive practices

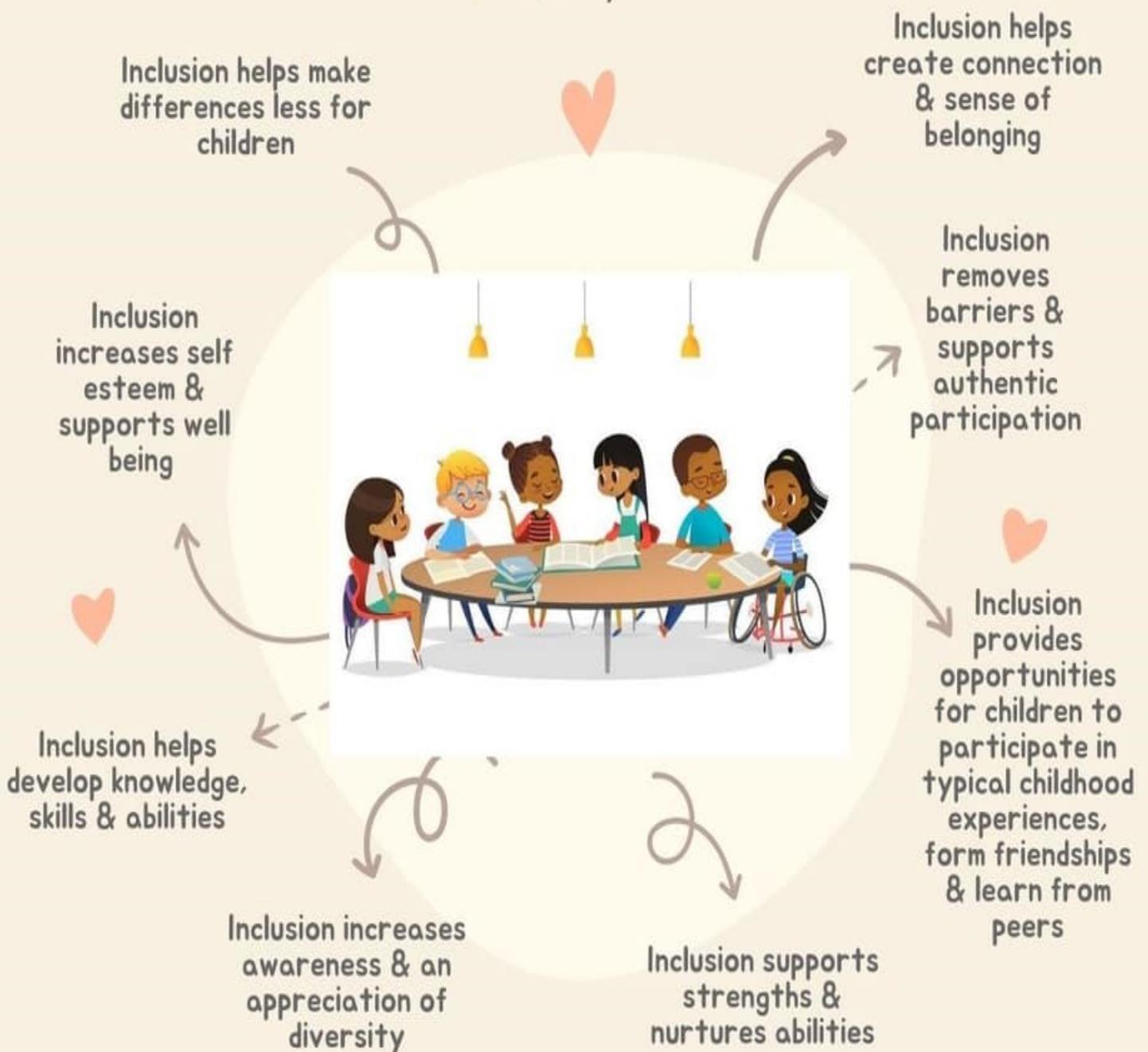
The following questions are based on characteristics of inclusive environments. They may be a valuable resource to engage in critical reflection during staff and team meetings on the types of environments being provided for all children within your learning spaces.

- Are we providing opportunities for children to explore, touch and manipulate?
- Is a sense of wonder and imagination evoked by what is presented?
- Do experiences build on children's interests and provide opportunities for quiet and imaginative play?
- How do we reflect and extend children's interests and inquisitiveness by the experiences that we offer?
- Where can we add unusual or unexpected materials that encourage children to be flexible thinkers?
- Do we really capitalise on the possibilities of our environments?
- How can we provide opportunities for children to create and make choices?
- Are group sizes small enough to allow for intentional teaching of play and social skills?
- Do we provide free opportunities to explore both the indoor and outdoor environment?



THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

@diversity kids



The role of the additional educator

The Inclusion Support Programme is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. As a part of the program, Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) support is available to assist educators in education and care services to include children with high support needs in a care environment.

This funding is used to contribute to the cost of employing an additional educator, with eligibility requirements and subsidy limits applying. It involves increasing the educator to child ratio above licensing requirements, with educators working as a team to meet the needs of all children within the care environment.

The additional educator is employed as an extra member of the team, to share the daily team responsibilities to ensure that all children can access and participate in all aspects of the program and curriculum. This shared responsibility means that while the cost of an additional educator may be supported with Inclusion Development Funding (IDF), linked to a particular child or children with ongoing high support needs, their role is to work with all children in the care environment.

The additional educator is over and above licensed ratio. For example, in a 3-5 room where the ratio is 2:20, with an additional educator it changes to 3:20, therefore ensuring the educator team can more appropriately meet the needs of all children including those with additional needs. The role of the additional educator will therefore look very similar to that of other educators in your service. IDF funding in centre-based long day care services is generally best used during the busier times of the day e.g. between 10am to 3pm. Whilst services may choose to split the additional educator hours approved across the day, it is important to remember that the funding to support increased ratios within the care environment should be rostered at the times that have been identified as the most challenging periods of each day.

It is inappropriate for the additional educator, or any educator, to only work with a child with ongoing high support needs in a one-to-one capacity, and to the exclusion of other children or educators in the care environment. Working in this way can single out the child and limits their opportunities to fully engage with other children, adults and the learning environment. What is important is that all educators support and remain with all children in the care environment, to ensure they can participate fully in all aspects of the day. If an educator is working one-to-one with a specific child for the time they are in care, this can be considered exclusion.

What does the Additional Educator do?

- The Additional Educator is employed as an extra member of the team to increase the number of educators in the care environment when a child with high support needs is attending.
- The Additional Educator works as a member of the team, sharing the daily work and responsibilities to support the participation of all children in all aspects of the program.
- The work of the Additional Educator will look similar to the roles of other educators in the room. They will interact with all children and provide support to individual children when needed, including the child with high support needs, as will all educators.

What does the Additional Educator not do?

- The Additional Educator is not solely responsible for a child with high support needs, or for providing ongoing one to one support.
- The Additional Educator does not have the primary relationship with the child's family, including key responsibility for communicating with the family.
- The Additional Educator cannot provide medical or nursing assistance to a child or provide early intervention therapy.
- The Additional Educator cannot be used to release educators from the care environment for programming and planning purposes, or for training and meetings.

What does an Additional Educator mean for the team?

- With an increased educator to child ratio, educators have an extra resource and can work together to implement the Strategies and Actions identified in their Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP).

What information will all educators need?

- It is important that all educators, including the Additional Educator, have an opportunity to discuss and clarify daily roles and responsibilities within the team, including implementing the Strategies and Actions in the SIP. This means educators will need to know when the Additional Educator will attend each week. This team approach will assist in providing a quality inclusive service where educators feel supported.

Will the additional educator have extra skills, knowledge and training that is specific to supporting children with high support needs?

- No, all educators within the team will be working with the child with high support needs, so there will be a range of knowledge, experience and skills available to support the child's inclusion within the program.

What do families need to know?

- All families want the best for their child, just as service providers want the best for all of the children in their service. This is a great way to start the conversation, identifying shared goals and making a commitment to work together to achieve them.
- Speak with families at enrolment about the service's philosophy and policies, including those that relate to inclusion. This provides the opportunity to talk about the benefits of inclusion for all children, acknowledging that how the service responds to individual children and families might look different according to their specific needs.
- Families may not be familiar with the role of the additional educator when a service is approved to access IDF subsidy. Families with children with high support needs may expect that the support provided will be similar to early intervention therapy or may expect one to one support for their child. Services should explain that the additional educator works as a member of the team and the increase in educator to child ratio will help educators to meet the needs of their child and all children.

Where to from here?

Questions for reflection:

When looking to apply for IDF Funding

- How will the increased educator/child ratio assist the team to include this child and all children?
- Specifically, what will all educators, including the additional educator, be doing throughout the day?

When funding has already been approved

- How are all educators, including the additional educator, informed about team goals as outlined in the SIP and the action steps to achieve them?
- What processes are in place for recording progress towards goals, key learning points and future directions?



[More Information](#)

Feedback handling strategy

Lady Gowrie Tasmania is the state-wide provider of Inclusion Support Program (ISP) which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills & Employment.

Purpose

The Inclusion Agency (IA) recognises the rights of clients and an effective feedback handling mechanism is essential in providing quality service delivery. Feedback both positive and corrective is a valuable and important tool for the IA and Inclusion Professionals (IP) as it supports us to identify the needs of our clients and stakeholders, understand any business shortcomings, increase client satisfaction and improve overall performance.

It is also a measure of client satisfaction. It provides positive feedback about aspects of the service that work well and is a useful source of information for continual improvement when there is a level of dissatisfaction with the service offered. Quality customer service consists of providing the appropriate service at the outset. Dealing with complaints is an opportunity for service recovery and continual improvement.

As the Inclusion Agency (IA) for Tasmania, Lady Gowrie Tasmania has a complaint handling strategy in place to provide an organised way of responding to complaints within the ISP. This involves recording, reporting and using complaints to improve service provision to clients. It includes procedures for clients to make complaints and guidelines for staff to resolve them. It provides information that can assist them to prevent customer dissatisfaction in the future.

Part of Lady Gowrie Tasmania's commitment to excellence in service delivery is to encourage positive and corrective feedback.

Submitting a complaint

Clients who are genuinely not happy with the level of service provided by The Inclusion Agency (IA) or who have a specific complaint against a specific employee are invited to take the course of action outlined below. We will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days of receiving it. Every effort will be made to resolve client dissatisfaction promptly.

Step One – First point of contact: clients are asked to discuss all complaints with the person concerned in the first instance. If the matter is resolved to your satisfaction at this stage, the issues or concerns do not need to be recorded as a complaint under these procedures.

Although not recorded as a complaint, the information attaining to this will be communicated with the IA Team Leader who will determine whether it should be added to the continual improvement register.

Only when this process is unsuccessful in resolving an issue or concern to the satisfaction of the client should a formal complaint be lodged for an internal investigation – see step two.

Step Two: A straight forward complaint may easily be dealt with by telephoning the Inclusion Agency. Should a resolution not be arrived at quickly, clients should notify Lady Gowrie Tasmania Support Services Program Leader in writing. Clients are asked to write down all relevant details of the complaint, including desired outcome, using the Client Complaint Report available on request to the Helpline on 1800 647 718 or Lady Gowrie Tasmania Website, for downloading. Email to inclusion@gowrie-tas.com.au

Step Three: The Business Development & Research General Manager (BD&R GM) shall be the designated person to manage complaints which were unable to be effectively resolved using Step One and Step Two.

Responding to your complaint

Once a complaint is lodged, it will immediately be forwarded to the Support Services Program Leader who will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days. If the complaint remains unresolved, the Support Services Program Leader will refer the complaint to the BD&R GM who will investigate the grounds for the complaint and undertake to respond to the client within 20 working days.

The investigation process must be objective, reasonable and conducted in good faith. Decision must be made on the weight of the evidence and on the balance of probabilities. Investigating a complaint may include:

- Clarifying the details within the complaint
- Gathering and analysing information from relevant documents/persons etc.
- Reviewing previous administration decisions or actions
- Interviewing relevant personnel
- Reviewing relevant policies and procedures, ISP guidelines and/or legislation

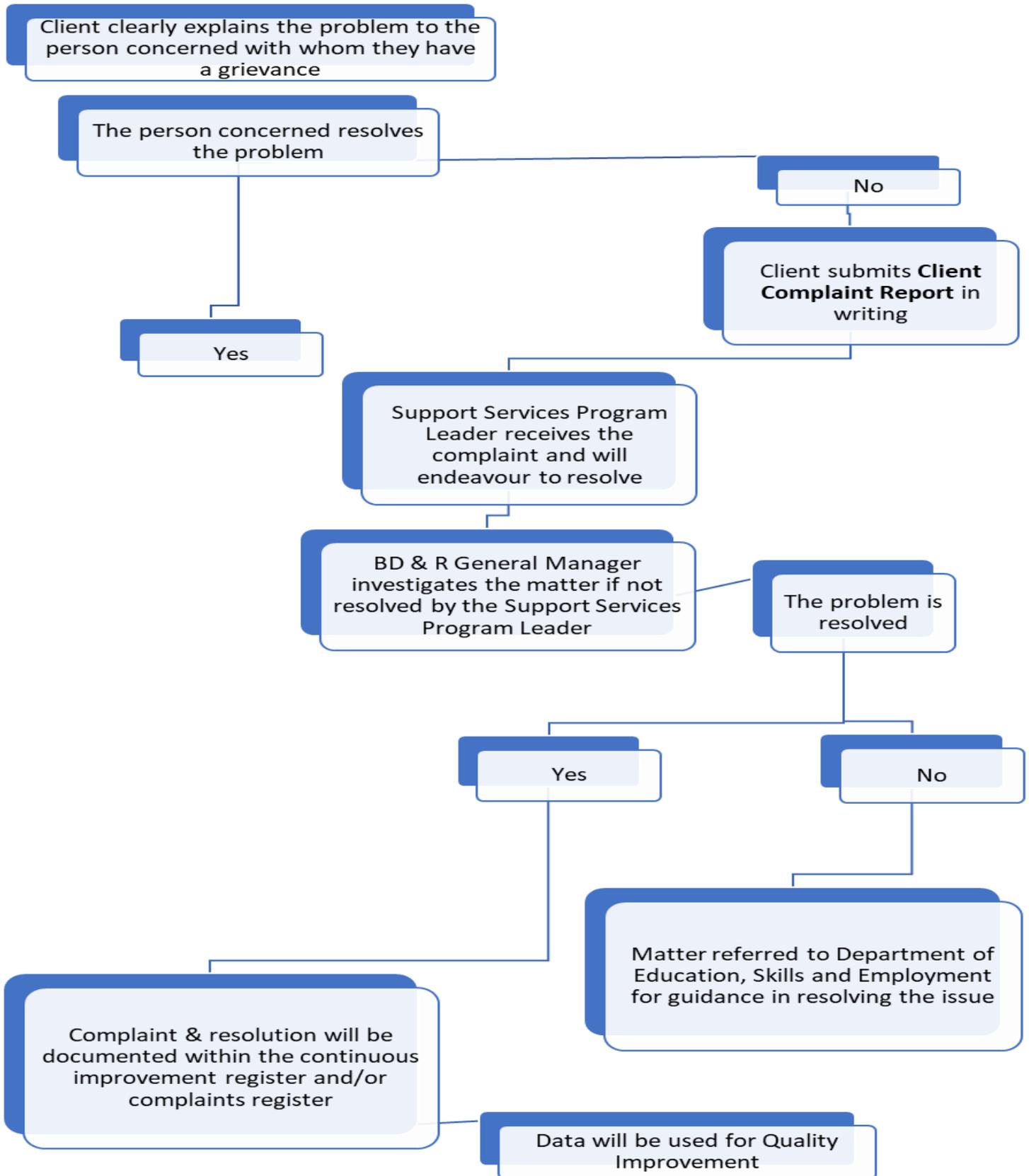
It is recognised that complex matters may require a more detailed, structured investigation to be conducted.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, arrangements for informal counseling between the complainant and the BD&R GM will be organised in an attempt to resolve the complaint where, if appropriate, an independent third party acceptable to both applicant and BD&R GM could be used to assist in resolving the complaint.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied the BD&R GM will contact the Australian Government Department Education, Skills and Employment for guidance in resolving the issue.

Correspondence regarding complaint outcomes will be documented in the complaints register and complainant will be informed in writing outlining the key findings and/or recommendations made concerning the complaint. All information relating to the resolution process will remain confidential within the scope of Lady Gowrie Tasmania's contract responsibilities.

Complaint Procedure



Feedback Handling Strategy

Community professional development



Playing with Gratitude

Rod Soper explores and the development, implementation and findings of the Playing with Gratitude Project and the role mental health has in children's learning and development.

[More Details](#)



Sue Larkey Podcast—Understanding Challenging Behaviour, ODD and PDA

In this podcast, Sue discusses Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) as well as outlining tips and strategies that can help understand challenging behaviour.

[More Details](#)



INCLUSION AGENCY TASMANIA

Please note Lady Gowrie Tasmania Inclusion Agency has offices in all three regions of the state, however, as Inclusion Professionals work predominately in early childhood and education and care services across the state, please direct any enquiries to Head Office where we can ensure a timely reply to your enquiry.

Monday to Friday 8:00am – 6:00pm (Head Office)

Operating 51 weeks of the year

After hours by arrangement

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