## Appendix A

### Checklist for an effective complaint-handling system:

#### Strong leadership and governance

**Does your organisation:**

- [ ] prioritise child safety and wellbeing?
- [ ] have an easy to understand complaint-handling system that children and young people, staff, volunteers and families can use?
- [ ] have a clear and publicly available code of conduct and/or guarantee of service?
- [ ] provide staff and volunteers with relevant information, training, mentoring and/or supervision to give them an understanding of what conduct must be reported and to whom, and what their responsibilities are under the complaints system?²
- [ ] have an open culture that supports people to speak up about concerns?

#### Fair and respectful treatment

**Does your organisation:**

- [ ] have strategies in place to ensure that people who make complaints are treated respectfully, courteously and sensitively?
- [ ] uphold equity and diversity in handling complaints?
- [ ] have a commitment to providing a fair and reasonable process for the complainant and the subject of complaint?

#### Accessibility

**Does your organisation:**

- [ ] make it easy to complain?
- [ ] enable people who engage with your organisation know what they can complain about, who they can speak to within the organisation and what they can expect in response from the organisation?
- [ ] make information about how to complain easy to find and available to children and young people, staff, volunteers and the community in different age and culturally appropriate formats (plain English, audio, different languages, etc)?
- [ ] make information publicly available via physical and online formats?

#### Flexibility

**Does your organisation:**

- [ ] make adjustments to complaint-handling process to suit the communication and support needs of children and young people and their parents or carers who take up concerns on their behalf?
- [ ] offer multiple ways to complain, including ones specifically informed by, and targeted to, the needs and wishes of children and young people?

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1 Adapted from the ‘Whole-of-Government Commitments to Effective Complaint Handling’ and NSW Ombudsman Frontline Complaint Handling Training resources.

2 Adapted from Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report, Volume 6: Appendix A: Practical guidance for implementing the Child Safe Standards.
Good communication

Does your organisation:

- keep people directly informed about the status of the complaint, and update other stakeholders when required?
- support people to make a complaint if they need it, such as engaging an interpreter, advocate or support person?
- provide ongoing feedback so people who complain and service users know what’s working and what has changed as a result of complaints?

Taking ownership

Does your organisation:

- ensure its complaint-handling system is understood by those responsible for its administration?
- clearly articulate the policies and procedures and clearly outline the roles, responsibilities and commitments of volunteers, staff, managers and the executive in relation to complaint handling?
- have staff that are trained and equipped with relevant skills to deal effectively with complaints, including those from children and young people?

Transparency

Does your organisation:

- have systems to document all complaints?
- have clear guidelines about this system documented in a clear, accessible complaint-handling policy?
- have a policy that covers what constitutes a complaint; roles and responsibilities; approaches to dealing with different types of complaints; obligations to act, report and record; timeframes; and advice on communication, referral and support for staff, volunteers, children and young people and their families?
- securely store complaint records?

Timeliness

Does your organisation:

- deal with complaints as soon as possible?
- ensure complainants and other relevant stakeholders are aware of your organisation’s timeframes for finalising their complaint?

Continuous improvement

Does your organisation:

- collect, analyse and review complaints data and general feedback, identify trends and systemic issues, detect behaviour patterns, and gain insights into the demographics of the people making complaints?
- use data collected about complaints to improve services and enhance child safety?

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