

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH YOUTH COMPLAINTS

Contents

1) Background	2
2) Objectives	2
3) Terminology	3
4) Young People's Experiences	3
o Barriers	
o Managing Expectations	
5) Communicating with young people	5
6) Disclosure of Sensitive Information	7
7) Complaint Process	8
o Enquiry Call	
o Oral complaints	
o Written complaints	
o Interviews	
o Ombudsman Oversight of Agency	
o Complaint handling by Ombudsman	
8) Specific groups	13
9) Recording youth complaints	14
Youth referral list	Appendix 1
Standard Paragraphs	Appendix 2
Readability Test	Appendix 3
Youth Advocate Consent Form	Appendix 4

1. Background

Why we need guidelines for young people

A key focus of the our Office is our commitment to young people and their right to be heard and acknowledged. Often complaint systems are designed by and for adults. By developing guidelines for dealing with youth complaints, the Ombudsman is acknowledging the importance of being accessible to young people. The guidelines will assist us to handle complaints from young people and their advocates in the best possible manner.

Development of Guidelines

Several phases underpin the implementation of the guidelines:

- researching and identifying other complaint agencies with similar guidelines
- gathering feedback through phone interviews and focus groups with young people and their advocates who had complained to us
- conducting discussions with staff to further develop the draft guidelines
- development of the guidelines
- training for staff, and
- implementation and evaluation.

2. Objectives

These guidelines compliment and build upon our complaints procedures and the Access and Awareness Strategy of our office. These guidelines aim to:

- enhance the Ombudsman's communication with young people and their representatives
- facilitate adequate support to young people during contact with us
- assist young people to feel a part of the complaint process
- improve the quality of handling a youth complaint
- foster realistic expectations about outcomes of complaints
- ensure the recording, reporting and analysis of information and the production of statistics about young people's contact with the Ombudsman, and
- increase the confidence of young people in the Ombudsman.

3. Terminology

Young Person

Generally, across NSW and Australia the accepted definition for a young person is a person who is between 12 and 24 years old. However, for the purpose of these guidelines a young person will be a 12 to 17 year old, as this is the age group, at times, which is most vulnerable and challenging to communicate with. There is a section in Part 8: Specific Groups that discusses issues pertaining to 18 to 24 year olds.

Advocate

An advocate is the person who contacts us on behalf of a young person. Advocates are most often parents, however advocates may also be youth workers, teachers, solicitors, foster carers, official community visitors, health workers or counsellors.

Youth Related Complaint

A youth related complaint is any complaint made by a young person or by an advocate on behalf of a young person. A youth complaint is a complaint received directly by a young person.

4. Young people's experiences

Barriers

Good practice begins with an understanding of how young people experience the complaints system. It involves overcoming barriers that may prevent young people from resolving complaints.

When taking a complaint from a young person, it is important to be mindful of these barriers, which may include:

- fear of withdrawal of service for complaining about that service
- power imbalance
- lack of trust in authority figures and complaint systems
- fear of retribution
- being used to little recognition as an important client group for government agencies
- lack of knowledge of complaints systems and complaint handling bodies
- lack of knowledge about the law and their rights, leading to a lack of awareness that their rights may have been breached
- lack of support
- feeling embarrassed that the incident occurred, and
- concerns about the confidentiality of their complaint.

Managing Expectations

Many young people are not aware of the nature and limitations of our role. It is therefore important that staff manage expectations early. You can do this by:

- explaining our role in age appropriate language, including informing the young person of the range of agencies we take complaints about
- ensuring the young person understands the limitations of what can be achieved by making a complaint
- explaining the process and the possible time frame
- informing the young person of who will be told, or not told, about the matter
- explaining to the young person their role in the process so they are aware of their responsibility
- ensuring the young person understands that we may have to handle complaints differently depending on the agency being complained about, however the young person can expect a consistent service from the Ombudsman
- asking the young person what outcome they want and what they need from us so they can feel safe and part of the process, and
- agreeing on the next step that will be taken to deal with the complaint.

If expectations are too high, try to then negotiate with the young person until you are both happy. For example, if the young person says “I want you to call me everyday” you can reply with “Well unfortunately I won’t be able to call you tomorrow, but how about I call you this time next week and I can tell you what is happening. Is that OK with you?”

5. Communicating with young people

Effective communication is one of the most important aspects of handling a youth complaint. It is crucial for you to develop skills in communicating with young people so you can facilitate their involvement in the complaints process.

When handling a youth complaint acknowledge the young person for overcoming barriers they may have had to complaining. Also remember that a young person may present with a complaint that does not represent the major issues they may be concerned about – you may need to dig deeper and that will take good communication and rapport.

Phone or in person

When talking to a young person over the phone:

- listen and be as open as you can, ask the young person to help you understand what is going on for them
- be patient and give the young person time to explain themselves, even if it is taking them a while, this makes them feel they are being listened to and taken seriously
- be yourself
- be fair and supportive
- be approachable and understanding
- don't be patronising instead talk to the young person
- ensure your tone and meaning are congruent
- avoid using jargon and acronyms
- stick to one issue at a time, and give information in small pieces
- don't minimise the young person's situation
- ask the young person if they have any questions or concerns
- make sure the young person understands what you are saying and what the next steps are by asking them to repeat it back to you in their own words. Don't just ask "do you understand?" By asking them to repeat what you have said in their words, you have the opportunity to adjust any misunderstandings.
- be careful about asking questions in a way that may indicate you don't believe the young person's account. Many young people maybe expecting you not to believe them.
- remember that they often won't relay the incident in chronological order and might also not think of things in relation to time or dates. Use cues to jog their memory about when things happened eg. "Was it just after school or just after it got dark or was it in the school holidays?"

Written

When writing to a young person via email or letter:

- be mindful of their level of literacy and reading age
- write the way you would speak
- address the young person by their first name - not 'Mr' or 'Ms'
- avoid standard letters and instead consider the standard paragraphs developed for young people at Appendix 2
- use short sentences, headings and/or dot points, and test reading age of your letter (see Appendix 3).

Engaging a young person

When trying to engage a young person during a phone or face-to-face interview there are several things you need to consider which includes:

- developing a rapport with the young person, this is critical to them being honest and open during an interview
- young people in an interview situation may feel like they don't have control or power so try and provide them with opportunities for choice eg "I would like to hear about your experiences, would you like to tell me about these freely or would you like me to ask you some questions first?"
- providing positive messages about who they are, for example the young person may say "I'm just a street kid" and you can reframe this, as "You know how to take care of yourself".
- considering the physical environment, location, and arrangement of interview space and seating, access for young people with a disability, and what you wear. Will the young person feel relaxed and open to talk in the environment?
 - a light and open feel to a room with some youth friendly accessories eg posters
 - sitting on opposite sides of a desk or other barriers is not advisable, as this will inhibit open communication. It is suggested that you both sit at a table but at right angles to each other.
 - if a support person is present, position them near the young person but not in a position where they can influence the young person. You could seat them slightly behind and to the side of the young person.
- young people may not talk or respond to your questioning for many different reasons. This may be overcome by:
 - not getting frustrated by silences, give them time to answer and if still silent ask another open-ended question
 - taking more time to build rapport and ask general questions to help relax them
 - explaining confidentiality and the purpose of the interview again
 - asking general questions to relax them
 - asking the young person if they would prefer to speak to someone else as there may be something about your gender, appearance, tone, or clothes that might trigger negative memories
 - encourage the young person to change their body positioning as this can greatly change mood, for example get them to lean forward to look at a brochure you have.
- a young person may also display aggressive behaviour or tone. In these situations you may want to consider having a third person in the room until rapport has been developed. Remember, aggression may simply be a defence mechanism.
- being careful of suggestibility in questioning or asking leading questions
- young people with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to susceptibility and manipulation particularly when being questioned or interviewed
- not persisting with specific questions if a young person has already said they can't remember, even if you feel they may be withholding information from you. In these circumstances it is best to continue to build rapport and allow them to offer information when they feel comfortable.

(Partly sourced: Blackman, L. [Representing Children and Young People](#) 2002, Victoria Law Foundation)

6. Young people's disclosure of sensitive information

At times during interviews with young people they may disclose sensitive information such as details about their own or other people's illegal activities or information that relates to the safety, welfare, or well-being of a child or young person, including themselves.

- The 'Disclosure of Information' policy and the 'Child Protection' policy in ADM/320, address these issues.
- Ombudsman staff may disclose information obtained in the course of their duty to a police officer, DoCS, or any other public authority that the Ombudsman considers appropriate if the information relates to the safety, welfare or well-being of a particular child or young person or is necessary to prevent or lessen the likelihood of harm being done to any person. However, the Youth Liaison Officer and their direct supervisor are mandatory reporters to DoCS.
- If a complainant threatens to harm himself or herself, or another person, or discloses information that relates to the safety, welfare, or well-being of a child or young person:
 - where the information concerns allegations of sexual or physical abuse, only gather enough information to clarify allegations. Do not gather specifics of the allegation as this may contaminate future evidence.
 - advise the complainant you are obliged to report such information
 - speak to your manager or statutory officer to discuss approval for disclosure to police or DoCS
 - read the relevant policy, and
 - record the incident and outcome in ADM/2635.
- Always discuss with your supervisor any information that you receive that you are unsure how to respond.

7. Complaint process

Enquiry Call

A telephone complaint or enquiry may be the first action taken by a young person about their complaint. It may also be the last if it is not handled effectively. When dealing with a telephone enquiry, remember to:

1. ask the young person to explain their complaint and ask them what they would like done about it
2. explain our role and manage expectations (see section 4). Explain exactly what we can and can't do in relation to their situation.
3. explain your specific role so you avoid confusion over the relationship between yourself, the young person, and the service/agency during the complaint process
4. if the complaint is serious assure them that the Ombudsman views it as serious
5. if the complaint highlights systemic issues raise it with your supervisor
6. determine whether the complaint raised during the enquiry call can be dealt with as an enquiry (follow next steps) or should be handled as a complaint (go to 'Oral Complaints'). Unless there are particular reasons, all complaints made directly by young people should be taken over the phone, unless the young person states they are happy to put the complaint in writing.
7. if the enquiry raised is out of jurisdiction then refer the young person to the correct agency. All efforts should be made to contact the agency or service you are referring them to so you can find out a contact name for the young person to contact directly.
8. ask the young person if they have contact with someone who can support them to follow up their issue eg their parents or another advocate. If not, and they want more information, use the referral list in Appendix 1 to assist them to find further support.
9. ask the young person if they would like a youth complaint brochure sent to them for future reference. Write the resolve reference number on the tear off section of the form.
10. if an advocate calls on behalf of a young person to make a complaint do not automatically assume that the advocate will assist the client to write their complaint as this is not always an advocate's role. Ask if the young person wants to speak with us directly.
11. if an advocate has contacted you on behalf of a young person send them a 'Youth Complaint Fact Sheet' as well as a consent form (see Appendix 4) so the young person can state how they would prefer to be contacted in future. It is not necessary for this form to be received. However, you need to let the advocate know that we will not be able to give information about the young person without the young person's consent.

Oral Complaints

For immediate action

Our Office aims to ensure our handling of young people's complaints is conducted in the most direct approach so the office is accessible to young people.

- Where it is appropriate to deal with a complaint immediately through phone enquiries to the agency, the complaint should be handled promptly and in a manner consistent with each team's processes and these Guidelines.
- After phone contact with the agency, ensure you call the young person to explain the outcome of your enquiries before sending your final letter to them.
- Where appropriate, when dealing with other agencies remind them of relevant points from our Guidelines about dealing with young people.

Reduce to writing to be assessed

Once you have determined that the young person's concerns should be reduced to writing and recorded as an oral complaint you should take the following steps:

1. clarify any details you require
2. explain the steps we will take in response to the complaint
3. tell the young person that you are taking notes of the conversation to be able to have a record of their problem as a formal complaint
4. ask the young person if they have any questions about the process
5. similarly, find out how the young person would prefer to be contacted, as some may prefer to communicate by phone, writing or email. You should attempt to identify these preferences at first contact and then handle the complaint in a way that accommodates them as far as possible, while continuing our statutory requirement of writing to them with the final outcome. If telephone is their preference, ask them the best time to call.
6. when reducing a telephone enquiry to writing, enter complaint details into Resolve as an Enquiry case with "Oral complaint accepted for assessment" as the outcome. Read the complaint back to the young person. Print the enquiry case and process in line with assessment procedures for written complaints.
7. send a copy of the enquiry entry to the young person along with a 'Youth Complaint Fact Sheet' and 'Youth Complaint Brochure'.

Written complaints

1. On receipt of a written complaint send a brief acknowledgement letter to the young person along with a 'Youth Complaint Fact Sheet' and 'Youth Complaint brochure'. If there is no contact number on the written complaint then request a number when you send the acknowledgement letter.
2. If an advocate complained on behalf of a young person send them a 'Youth Complaint Fact Sheet' as well as a consent form (see Appendix 4) so the young person can state how they would prefer to be contacted in future.
3. The case officer must attempt to call the young person or their advocate within 2 days of receipt of the file. If you are not successful in contacting a person by phone then include in the next letter you send them a brief invite for the young person to call you.

Interviews

Interview Structure

NB: This interview structure may not be appropriate for all types of interviews.

1. spend time planning before the interview
2. prepare the interview environment
3. start by establishing rapport – see Section 6: Communicating with Young People
4. explain the purpose of the interview, what your role is and you will be recording the interview
5. ask general open-ended questions then move to specific questioning – let the young person tell you their story in their own words
6. finish the interview with a summary of what was discussed and explain what's next.

Ombudsman Oversight of Agency

When conducting oversight of a youth complaint, follow your team's procedures and consider these guidelines. To exercise effective oversight we need to be aware of practices that work against a successful determination of a complaint. Use the tips in the guidelines and the following points to assess agencies' handling of youth complaints are appropriate. Look for:

- inappropriate questioning
- lack of opportunity for the young person to disclose relevant information
- power imbalance and lack of independent support for the young person in interviews
- the young person not being spoken to in language appropriate for their age, therefore causing them to have a lack of understanding of the process and thus affecting their willingness to participate.

Also actively consider special legal requirements for and entitlements of young people. Where appropriate, raise particular issues relevant to the young person with the agency at the outset.

For police complaints where the young person may be particularly vulnerable (see section 8) or need additional support, consider whether it is in the public interest to monitor the complaint. Discuss these matters with your supervisor and the Youth Liaison Officer. You may be required to sit in on the interviews, especially with the young person.

Complaint handling by Ombudsman

For matters you are directly investigating or making preliminary inquiries into:

- take the time to build rapport with the young person
- you should have previously made an agreement about methods of contact and how often contact should occur
- young people may perceive a delay in response as an indication that their complaint is not important or that it is not being followed up. Where delays occur ensure you contact the young person with an explanation for the delay.
- don't pass the young person around. Ideally they should only have to speak with a maximum of two people within our office from start to finish of complaint process.
- where an advocate is acting on behalf of a young person, ask if the young person wants to speak to you so they can understand the process. Try and engage the young person and therefore empower them for future contact.

All youth complaint files will be tagged with a green sticker to help complaint officers quickly recognise youth complaints. The purpose is to highlight the case files that you may need to visit more regularly so you keep in contact with the young person. A checklist for youth complaints will also be placed at the front of the file.

Conciliation (ADR)

See Chapter 4 in the *NSW Ombudsman Complaint Handler's Tool Kit* for tips about conducting general conciliations. For young people consider the following:

- Does the young person have a support person who can be present?
- Is the venue you have chosen an environment where the young person would feel comfortable?
- Where appropriate, conduct a pre-conciliation meeting with both parties. For young people, the following points are particularly important:
 - explain the process and ensure there is a clear understanding of the conciliator's role and responsibilities i.e. not an advocate
 - clarify the role of the young person's support person beforehand
 - explore potential expectations and realistic outcomes
 - find out if the young person perceives a power imbalance, threats or other concerns. Address this with both parties before the conciliation. Ensure they feel comfortable to express their opinions.
 - ensure the young person understands that they are volunteering to participate and therefore can withdraw from the conciliation at any time
 - work through the 'Agreement to Mediate' statement with the young person so they understand the process
- Discuss acceptable behaviour and get an acknowledgement of this from all parties during the conciliation
- At the end of the conciliation we may monitor any actions that were agreed upon

Finalising complaint

When you are about to finalise the complaint make sure you:

- give clear reasons to the complainant why we are not pursuing the complaint further or/and outline what we did for them
- have a list of key youth advocacy groups that can be provided to the young person that may address other issues they have (see Appendix 1)
- if the complaint was unresolved, consider including in the final letter that we do record information which can inform us about problems in common areas for other young people. This will help the young people realise that their complaint may still have had an outcome.
- if you believe the young person was particularly vulnerable consider contacting them, via letter or phone, in three months time to ask them if the service/agency had done what they had promised and if they had any further issues
- if the agency/service has planned or is undertaking resolution or remedial action and the young person is particularly vulnerable, monitor the agency/service's implementation of the actions by seeking periodic reports, e.g. 3 monthly.

8. Specific groups

When handling complaints by young people you need to consider whether they may be a:

- young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- young person from a culturally diverse background
- young person with a disability including those with mental health issues
- young person in residential care
- young person who is homeless/transient
- young person who is same sex attracted
- young person in a juvenile justice centre
- young person with drug and alcohol issues.

If a young person identifies with one or more of these groups they may be more vulnerable and isolated than other young people. Often young people from these groups have had negative and discriminatory experiences with government agencies or authority figures in general. You need to consider any language, cultural, developmental, physical, emotional, or environmental barriers that may make it more difficult to communicate. You may need to spend more time with these young people to understand their barriers and to build rapport and trust.

Appendix 1 has a list of people within our office who can help you work with these groups.

Juvenile Justice

When taking an oral complaint by a young person ask them if they are ok with you ringing them back at the centre to tell them the outcome of the complaint.

Once you have made preliminary enquiries or resolved the complaint, call the centre and ask to speak with the detainee. Usually the centre will put you through to the Unit Manager who will then put the young person on the phone or get them to call you back. Ask the young person if they are able to speak freely, if not get them to call you back from the private phone box in their unit. Follow up your phone contact with a final letter.

Further information on Juvenile Justice can be found in section 4 of the General Team Procedure Manual, in ADM/76.

18 to 21 year olds

Some 18 to 21 year olds can be vulnerable because of the sudden change in services available to them as an 'adult' compared to a 'child'. For example, young people previously in the care of the Minister of Community Services find themselves mostly without support. At 18 young people also are seen as adults by law and the criminal justice system.

Also for some 18 to 21 year olds it may be their first time away from their families, and for others they will begin to deal with personal questions, such as their sexuality etc. These points may also relate to university students and can affect the way they cope and participate during the complaint process.

Ensure you stay open to the possibility of this age group having particular vulnerabilities and assess their capability on a case-by-case basis.

9. Recording youth related complaints

The intention is to capture in Resolve details of youth related complaints about young people aged between 12 to 24 and where possible to distinguish between 12 – 17 year olds and 18 – 24 year olds. The aim is to bring consistency across our office for recording data about youth related complaints.

1. Enter details of the person making the complaint in the person detail screen. If the complaint or enquiry is from a person other than a young person (which is very often the case), fill in that person's details and go to step 2. If the complaint or inquiry came directly from the young person, then their details must be entered in the complainant details, then proceed directly to step 3.
2. Go to the 'Parties & XRefs' screen and check if the details of the young person (if the complaint was made on their behalf) are correct. The 'Case Parties' field records the details of the young person as 'on behalf of'. If there are no details of the young person, then bring it to the attention of the data entry person in your team to enter the details.
3. Click on Additional Information and click in the 'CLASS2' field. The word 'youth' can be highlighted in the pull down menu and then click on it. A mandatory field 'Youth Age Group' will appear where you need to record whether they are '12-17 years old', '18-24 years olds' or 'unknown'. An example is given below.
4. For complaints about police where the complainant is between 10 to 17 years of age inclusive you need to tick the Juvenile and Youth tick boxes in Additional Information, as well as completing step 3 above.
5. If the youth complaint was also received on our Youth Complaint Brochure then add this to the 'Received by brochure' drop down list also in Additional Information.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "New Case - Case Entry". The window has a menu bar with "Save", "Undo", "Copy", "Replicate", "Tasks", and "Close Case". Below the menu bar are several tabs: "General", "Incident Location", "Actions", "Issue", "Additional Info.", "Comments", "Parties & XRefs", "Documents", and "File Movements". The "Additional Info." tab is active, and the "Custom Fields" section is visible. The fields are as follows:

Characteristic:	[Dropdown]
Monitor?	[Dropdown]
CLASS2:	YOUTH
Youth Age Group:	12-17 years old
Received From Brochure:	Youth Complaint Brochure

APPENDIX 1: YOUTH REFERRAL LIST

Advice from Staff

If you need advice to complete a youth related enquiry or complaint you can contact one of the following staff members.

Young People in General - Youth Liaison Officer ext: 094

ATSI - Aboriginal Unit, ext: 939

Disability - Mark Mallia, Community Service Division ext: 934

Mental Health Issues – Sarah Harris, Community Service Division ext: 919

In Detention - Helen Ford, General Team ext: 993

In Care – Alison McKenzie, Investigation Officer, CSD ext: 941

Homeless– Kim Kenny, Assistant Investigation Officer, CSD ext 902

University - Liz Humphrys, Project Officer, General Team ext 010

External Advocacy Groups

The following agencies may be able to assist young people to take their complaint further. You can give the contact details of these agencies or.

Legal Aid Hotline for under 18's **1800 10 18 10**

Operates from Monday - Friday: 9.00 am - midnight; Weekends and Public Holidays: 24 hours. It is a legal advice line manned by criminal lawyers who specialise in the Young Offenders Act.

Intellectual Disability Rights Service **1800 666 611**

IDRS works with people with an intellectual disability to exercise and advance their rights. Legal advice and information is provided for people with an intellectual disability or others acting on their behalf within NSW. Initial advice is provided over the phone by appointment.

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association **1800 629 072**

MDAA is the only advocacy service in NSW available specifically to people from a NESB with disability, their families and carers.

Community Legal Centres - **<http://www.nswclc.org.au/clcs.html>** (find local centre)

CLCs are independent community organisations providing free legal advice and information as well as legal education for individuals and communities across NSW. Some youth specific legal centres are:

- National Children's and Youth Law Centre - 93987488
- Marrickville Legal Centre's Children's Legal Service (U'18s) - 95592899
- Shopfront Youth Legal Service (U'25s) - 9360 1847

Aboriginal Legal Services - **<http://www.nwjc.org.au/at isla.html>**

These are indigenous organisations that provide legal aid in a culturally appropriate way.

Other Support Persons

These can be used as a prompt to ask the young person whether they have asked these people for support

- Juvenile Justice Officer (if they are linked with JJ already)
- Youth worker at the local youth centre
- Youth worker at the youth refuge they are staying in
- School (principal, counsellor, head teacher welfare)

APPENDIX 2: STANDARD PARAGRAPHS

The following paragraphs are to be used as a guide only to assist you in writing to young people. Please ensure you adjust the paragraphs to suit each individual complaint.

Our Role

The NSW Ombudsman makes sure NSW agencies are doing the right thing by you. You can complain to the Ombudsman if you feel you have been unfairly treated by a NSW government agency or a community service such as a youth refuge.

The Ombudsman may look into the issue by speaking to the agency involved. We can make recommendations to the agency to fix the problem.

Not in Jurisdiction

Unfortunately, we are unable to deal with your complaint. The Ombudsman does not have the power to handle complaints about [agency].

Although we cannot help you this time, [appropriate referral] may be able to take your complaint or give you further advice. I encourage you to contact them on: [contact details].

Premature

The Ombudsman usually asks people to complain to the [agency] first so they have a chance to fix the problem. If you are not happy with the way the [agency] deals with your problem then you can contact us again.

However, if you are worried about complaining to the agency please call us for advice.

Preliminary Inquiries

I have written to [agency] to ask them for their comment about the problem you have raised. I will call you once I have received a reply.

Request Further Information

I am writing to ask you for more detail about your complaint. More information will help me decide how best to deal with your complaint. You can write to me or talk to me over the phone. Simply write to [our address] or call me on [phone number]. If you only have a mobile number I can call you back.

Police Youth Monitor

Thank you for contacting us. As I said on the phone, NSW Police will be investigating your complaint. Our office will monitor how police do this. This means that I will be there when police talk to you about your complaint. My role is to independently observe how police deal with your complaint. If you would like, you can also ask a representative or friend to come with you. If you have any further questions please call me on [phone number].

End Paragraph

Congratulations for taking steps to change your situation. I encourage you to speak to someone again if you have another problem. Thank you for contacting us.

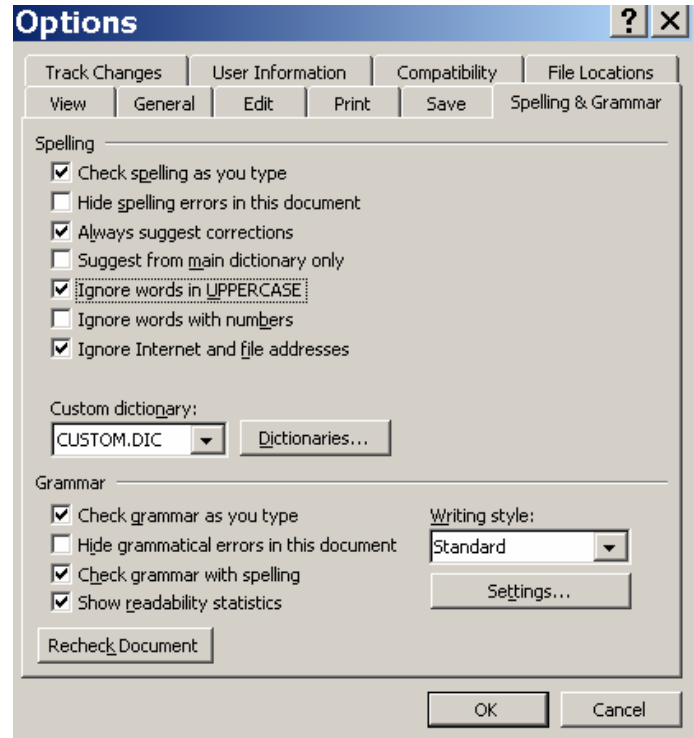
APPENDIX 3: READABILITY TEST

SET UP

1. In Word go to Tools then click Options. The adjacent box will appear on your screen.
2. In the Grammar section make sure there is a tick next to 'show readability statistics'. This will stay as a permanent setting.

TESTING READABILITY OF EACH LETTER

1. When you are in your document go to Tools
2. Click Spelling and Grammar
3. Complete your spell check.
4. At the end of your spell check the following box will appear.



Readability Statistics	
Counts	
Words	194
Characters	879
Paragraphs	19
Sentences	8
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	1.3
Words per Sentence	19.7
Characters per Word	4.2
Readability	
Passive Sentences	12%
Flesch Reading Ease	74.8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	7.7

- Each readability score bases its rating on the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence.
- Rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 60 to 70.
- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is based on U.S. grade-school level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand the document. Aim for a score of approximately 7.0 to 8.0.

Consent for youth advocate to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman on behalf of young person.

I, _____, consent to _____
Your Name Advocate's Name

making a complaint on my behalf to the Ombudsman.

I would like all further contact dealt with in the following way:
(tick one box)

- Please communicate directly with my advocate about this complaint.
- Please communicate directly with me about this complaint via
phone letter email (number in order of preference)
- Please communicate directly with me and send copies to my advocate.

Advocates Name: _____

Position: _____ Organisation: _____

Phone no: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Advocate

Your Name: _____

Phone no: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Your signature

[Send with complaint to the Ombudsman, Level 24, 580 George Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000]