



Speaking Out About Making Complaints

When the Commissioner for Children and Young People in WA asked young people to help create new resources about speaking up when they don't feel safe or respected, 680 children and young people across Australia got involved!

534 children and young people from WA, Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory took part in focus groups.

146 children and young people completed an online survey.

51% had made a complaint before.

81% thought it was not easy to speak up.

19% thought it was easy to speak up.

What did children and young people say?

They don't always know they have the right to speak up and raise concerns, and worry they'll get in trouble or attract negative attention if they do.

"Letting children know they don't have to put up with bad behaviour from other people, including adults."

"I guess I'm afraid of people's reactions or the negative impacts speaking up could have on me or the people I'm close [to]."

They would seek help to speak up from a trusted adult, someone who is respectful, kind and listens.

"Having someone who listens and will do, or try to do, something."

"I would talk to a teacher or a grown-up because they can help deal with it."

What did children and young people say?

They want to know about other organisations that can help (like Kids Helpline and headspace).

"Ask for more information - find out if it's happening to others. This will help you decide what to do and where to go."

"To make it easier for a child or someone to complain maybe online there could be a website where you complain."

They want step-by-step help on how to make a complaint, and for adults to be better at helping them through the process.

"It's important that the adults who hear your complaint have proper training, believe you and actually help you."

"Having alternative ways to provide feedback or complaints (e.g. via email or online form) may make it more accessible for some young people."



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Children and young people also had some suggestions to help share the resources and spread the word:

Put the posters on the walls or on the back of toilet doors.

Put them in welcome packs, emails and social media posts.

Use them to do presentations at assemblies or meetings, and put them in newsletters.

What did the Commissioner do?

After listening to children and young people's ideas the Commissioner made the Speak Up And Make A Complaint resources, which included:



A poster and brochure for children and young people about how to speak up and make a complaint.



A step-by-step guide for adults on how to support children and young people to speak up.



Two videos for adults, to help them learn about listening to complaints from children and young people.

The Commissioner will keep sharing the Speak Up resources across WA and encourage organisations to display them. The resources are online at the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the National Office for Child Safety websites.

If you would like to contact the Commissioner

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