

# CEDR CASEWORKER COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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Good practices, or 'competencies', are foundational professional strengths that help all caseworkers to do their job well. Competencies underpin the way in which a caseworker approaches a situation, driving their behaviour and guiding their level of success.

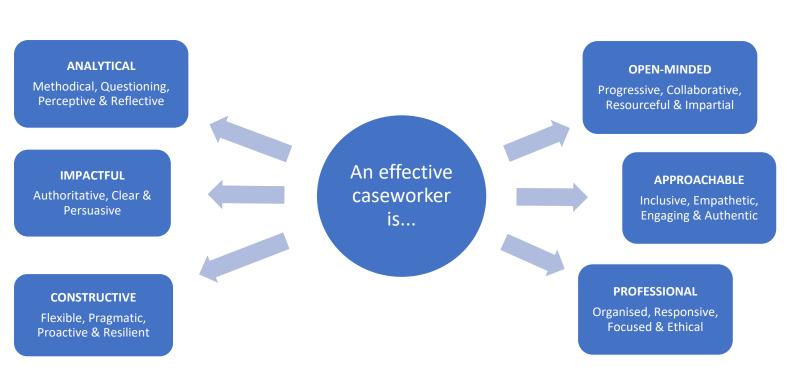
In delivering its consumer dispute resolution services across a wide range of industries and sectors, CEDR seeks to adhere to, and where possible build upon, the competencies set out in the Ombudsman Association's Caseworker Competency Framework, which was created in 2018 and sets out what is considered to be good practice in the way in which caseworkers interact with others and make decisions.

#### **CEDR's caseworkers**

CEDR supports its service users in many different ways. A caseworker is a member of staff who has a direct role in helping to resolve a complaint. This includes staff members who give advice, carry out investigations and make decisions on cases.

Caseworkers at CEDR can be distinguished into two groups: **administrative caseworkers**, who are those engaged in the administration of cases; and **adjudicative caseworkers**, comprising the adjudicators, conciliators, arbitrators and other neutrals who carry out case investigations and evaluate the merits of cases in order to reach decisions.

Complaints referred to CEDR may be resolved by mutual agreement between the parties, in which case users will have contact with perhaps one administrative caseworker. Alternatively, a complaint may involve a full investigative adjudication and assessment of its merits, where an adjudicative caseworker will be involved. Different CEDR caseworkers will become involved depending on the unique circumstances of each case.





### **Core competency 1: ANALYTICAL**

An effective caseworker critically examines information and issues to arrive at well-reasoned and appropriate decisions that stand up to scrutiny.

	Methodical	Questioning	Perceptive	Reflective
Administrative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Carries out tasks systematically</li> <li>Distils complex problems into manageable parts</li> <li>Gathers and assimilates information efficiently</li> <li>Engages with internal expert advisers where relevant</li> <li>Draws reasonable conclusions from complicated or incomplete data in making an initial assessment</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Looks at problems and evidence with a critical eye</li> <li>Probes to identify the key issues, separating opinion from fact at the intake stage</li> <li>Actively listens and clarifies understanding</li> <li>Identifies knowledge gaps and seeks to address them, where appropriate</li> <li>Checks the meaning and source of information, where appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Considers problems in their wider organisational and external contexts</li> <li>Identifies and reports trends across data and experiences</li> <li>Understands when to escalate issues or seek input</li> <li>Recognises the validity, relevance and limitations of different types of evidence</li> <li>Detects and guards against risks</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Monitors progress against plans and objectives</li> <li>Identifies and learns from mistakes</li> <li>Measures and evaluates the success of a</li> <li>Seeks feedback and acts upon it in a timely manner</li> <li>Considers how others within or outside CEDR might benefit from learnings</li> </ul>
Adjudicative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Carries out a systematic and detailed investigation of the evidence and law</li> <li>Distils complex information into manageable parts</li> <li>Understands and assimilates information efficiently</li> <li>Draws reasonable conclusions from complicated or incomplete data in making decisions</li> <li>Applies sound and comprehensive reasoning to reach logical decisions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Looks at problems and evidence with a critical eye</li> <li>Probes to identify the key issues, separating opinion from fact at the investigation and decision-making stages</li> <li>Identifies knowledge gaps and seeks to address them by requesting further evidence</li> <li>Checks the meaning and source of information where appropriate</li> <li>2</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Considers 'the bigger picture', looking at problems in wider organisational and external contexts</li> <li>Identifies and reports trends across data and experiences</li> <li>Understands when to escalate issues or seek input</li> <li>Recognises the validity, relevance and limitations of different types of evidence</li> <li>Detects and guards against risks</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Monitors         performance         against objectives</li> <li>Identifies and         learns from         mistakes</li> <li>Measures and         evaluates the         success of a         decision or         approach</li> <li>Seeks feedback         and acts upon it in         a timely manner</li> <li>Considers how         others within or         outside CEDR         might benefit from         learnings</li> </ul>



#### **Core competency 2: IMPACTFUL**

An effective caseworker uses their communication skills to influence a diverse range of people, building consensus and understanding.

	Clear	Persuasive	Authoritative
Administrative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Uses plain language that is easy to understand</li> <li>Communicates complex issues in a concise and straightforward manner</li> <li>Drafts documents in Plain English</li> <li>Provides explanations before misunderstandings occur</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Adjusts communication tone and style to suit the audience</li> <li>Presents information in a way that is evidence-based and convincing</li> <li>Strikes a sound balance between directness and diplomacy</li> <li>Communicates using appropriate methods and timing</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Quickly builds credibility</li> <li>Displays confidence in own ability and explanation of process</li> <li>Interacts confidently with others and appropriately articulates points of view</li> <li>Makes robust decisions, as appropriate for role level and case stage</li> </ul>
Adjudicative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Uses clear and plain language that is easy to understand for a consumer audience</li> <li>Avoids jargon where possible</li> <li>Communicates complex issues in a concise and straightforward manner</li> <li>Drafts well-structured, comprehensible decisions in Plain English</li> <li>Provides explanations before misunderstandings occur</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Adjusts communication tone and style to suit the audience</li> <li>Presents information in a way that is evidence-based and convincing</li> <li>Strikes a sound balance between directness and diplomacy</li> <li>Communicates using appropriate language and tone</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Quickly builds         credibility</li> <li>Displays confidence         in own ability and         decision-making</li> <li>Clearly explains the         rationale for         decisions or actions</li> <li>Interacts confidently         with others and         appropriately         articulates points of         view</li> <li>Makes robust         decisions</li> </ul>



### **Core competency 3: CONSTRUCTIVE**

An effective caseworker successfully navigates changing and sometimes challenging environments to respond dynamically to service users' needs and achieve personal and organisational goals.

	Flexible	Pragmatic	Proactive	Resilient
Administrative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Adjusts priorities to reflect the demands of customers, both internal and external</li> <li>Shows awareness of how an approach impacts on others and adapts accordingly</li> <li>Embraces change and seeks opportunities to learn from it</li> <li>Responds nimbly to changing work practices and situations</li> <li>Is willing to take on new tasks or roles</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reaches         sustainable         initial         assessments,         taking into         account their         practical         implications</li> <li>Provides         usable results         and outputs</li> <li>Undertakes         initial         assessments         of appropriate         depth relative         to all the         circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Takes         initiative in         achieving         and         improving         outcomes</li> <li>Takes         ownership of         intake tasks         Thinks ahead         and prepares         for the future</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Shows tenacity in pursuing goals and managing workload</li> <li>Accepts that situations are sometimes uncertain and continues to strive for excellence despite this</li> <li>Knows when to ask for help and support</li> <li>Deals calmly with conflict and meets the challenges of difficult/complex complaints</li> </ul>
Adjudicative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Shows awareness of how an approach impacts on others and adapts accordingly</li> <li>Embraces change and seeks opportunities to learn from it</li> <li>Responds nimbly to changing work practices and situations</li> <li>Is willing to take on new tasks or roles</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reaches         realistic and         sustainable         decisions,         taking into         account their         practical         implications</li> <li>Provides         usable results         and outputs</li> <li>Looks for         mutually         beneficial         solutions</li> <li>Undertakes         investigations         of appropriate         depth relative         to all the         circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Takes         initiative in         achieving         and         improving         outcomes</li> <li>Takes         ownership of         tasks and         decisions</li> <li>Thinks ahead         and prepares         for the future</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Shows tenacity in pursuing goals and managing workload</li> <li>Accepts that situations are sometimes uncertain and continues to strive for excellence despite this</li> <li>Knows when to ask for help and support</li> <li>Deals calmly with conflict and meets the challenges of difficult/complex complaints</li> </ul>



### **Core competency 4: APPROACHABLE**

## An effective caseworker creates an open and reassuring culture to earn the trust of others and generate confidence in the case-handling process.

	Inclusive	Empathetic	Engaging	Authentic
Administrative	• Treats others with	Sees things	<ul> <li>Approaches</li> </ul>	Acts with
caseworkers	courtesy, dignity	from other	situations with	integrity,
	and respect at all	people's	enthusiasm,	openness and
	times	perspectives,	conviction and	honesty
	<ul> <li>Recognises</li> </ul>	recognising	positivity	• Leads by
	diversity and	and	• Presents	example
	difference	accounting for	information on	Is sincere and
	Adopts an open	the barriers	process in a way	candid in
	and appropriate communication	they might face	that fosters	interactions with others
	style	• Shows	genuine understanding	<ul><li>Sets high</li></ul>
	Works to make	sensitivity,	<ul><li>Uses relevant</li></ul>	personal
	the service	discretion and	illustrations and	standards
	accessible to all	tolerance	comparisons to	Starradias
	Contributes to a	towards others	explain complex	
	positive	Quickly builds	concepts	
	organisational	trust and		
	culture	rapport		
		• Delivers		
		difficult		
		messages with		
		tact and		
Adjudicative	Treats others with	sensitivity	Approaches	Acts with
Adjudicative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Treats others with courtesy, dignity</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sees things from other</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Approaches situations with</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Acts with integrity,</li> </ul>
Caseworkers	and respect at all	people's	enthusiasm,	openness and
	times	perspectives,	conviction and	honesty
	Recognises	recognising	positivity	Leads by
	diversity and	and	<ul> <li>Presents</li> </ul>	example
	difference	accounting for	decisions in a	Is sincere and
	<ul> <li>Adopts an open</li> </ul>	the barriers	way that fosters	candid in
	and appropriate	they might	genuine	interactions
	communication	face	understanding	with others
	style	• Shows	<ul> <li>Uses relevant</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sets high</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Works to make</li> </ul>	sensitivity,	illustrations and	personal
	the service	discretion and	comparisons to	standards
	accessible to all	tolerance	explain complex	
	Contributes to a	towards others	concepts	
	positive organisational	Quickly builds trust and		
	culture	rapport		
	Cultuic	Delivers		
		difficult		
		messages with		
		tact and		
		sensitivity		



### **Core competency 5: OPEN-MINDED**

### An effective caseworker approaches problems and new ideas without prejudgement to generate fair solutions that maximise the potential of available resources.

	Progressive	Collaborative	Resourceful	Impartial
Administrative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Embraces         innovation and         looks for ways to         get the most         from new         approaches</li> <li>Identifies and         suggests         improvements to         ways of working</li> <li>Keeps abreast of         relevant</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Develops strong working relationships and networks</li> <li>Seeks input and insights from others</li> <li>Works effectively in a team</li> <li>Delivers timely and</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Develops         options and         considers         alternatives</li> <li>Weighs costs         and benefits of         possible         approaches,         taking into         account the         interests of all         parties, to</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Acts with neutrality and objectivity</li> <li>Is aware of how decisions are affected by unconscious bias</li> <li>Is able to make difficult or unpopular decisions at</li> </ul>
	professional developments	constructive feedback to others • Shares	maximise the effectiveness of the process • Manages	the intake stages when necessary
		knowledge	limited resources efficiently to	
			achieve results	
Adjudicative caseworkers	Embraces     innovation and     looks for ways to     get the most	Develops     strong working     relationships     and networks	Develops     options and     considers     alternatives	<ul> <li>Acts with neutrality and objectivity</li> <li>Is aware of how</li> </ul>
	from new approaches Identifies and suggests improvements to	<ul> <li>Seeks input and insights from others</li> <li>Works effectively in a</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Weighs costs and benefits of possible approaches, taking into</li> </ul>	decisions are affected by unconscious bias and openly interrogates
	<ul> <li>ways of working</li> <li>Keeps abreast of relevant professional developments</li> </ul>	team  • Delivers timely and constructive feedback to	account the interests of all parties, to maximise the effectiveness of	decision- making processes to minimise its impact
		others • Shares knowledge	the process  Manages limited resources efficiently to achieve results	Is able to make difficult or unpopular decisions when necessary



#### **Core competency 6: PROFESSIONAL**

### An effective caseworker strives for excellence in all their individual and team endeavours to meet other people's expectations and deliver a high-quality service.

	Organised	Responsive	Focused	Ethical
Administrative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Plans and prioritises workload effectively</li> <li>Follows relevant systems, processes and policies</li> <li>Keeps complete and clear records of all interactions</li> <li>Successfully manages interconnected processes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Delivers on promises and meets agreed deadlines</li> <li>Responds to others in a timely manner</li> <li>Demonstrates focus on impartiality</li> <li>Operates at pace</li> <li>Revisits plans when circumstances change</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sets objectives and has direction</li> <li>Pursues personal and organisational goals with energy and determination</li> <li>Shows commitment to and pride in high quality service delivery</li> <li>Strives for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	Upholds     CEDR's values     Acts in     accordance     with     fundamental     principles such     as fairness,     equality and     respect for     individual     rights     Pursues justice     in both     outcomes and     processes at     the intake
Adjudicative caseworkers	<ul> <li>Plans and prioritises workload effectively</li> <li>Follows relevant systems, processes and policies</li> <li>Keeps complete and clear records of decisions</li> <li>Successfully manages interconnected processes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Delivers on promises and meets agreed deadlines</li> <li>Responds to others in a timely manner</li> <li>Demonstrates focus on impartiality</li> <li>Operates at pace</li> <li>Revisits plans when circumstances change</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sets objectives and has direction</li> <li>Pursues personal and organisational goals with energy and determination</li> <li>Shows commitment to and pride in high quality service delivery</li> <li>Strives for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	stages  Upholds CEDR's values  Acts in accordance with fundamental principles such as fairness, equality and respect for individual rights  Pursues justice in both outcomes and processes