



## COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS

### **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

To assist staff, clients/participants and their representatives with the timely and effective management of compliments and complaints.

### **POLICY**

A complaint is an expression of concern, displeasure or frustration with the quality of the service you receive, an employee's conduct or our policies and procedures.

It is our policy to enable clients/participants, their families, representatives, visitors and staff to provide feedback or raise a complaint about any aspect of their service and the care we provide.

The aim of this policy is to improve the quality of care and services provided by adopting a positive, blame-free approach to resolving complaints.

Complaint Handling will be a standing agenda item on staff/management meetings and all staff will receive a copy of the compliments and complaints policy and will undertake training in Complaint Handling.

Compliments received by the service tell us what we're doing right. Complaints received by the service are seen as an opportunity for improvement. All feedback is taken seriously.

We will make all reasonable efforts to understand issues or concerns, and resolve complaints within the service when they arise.

The timely and efficient management of complaints fosters a positive, cooperative attitude with clients/participants, their representatives, visitors and staff.

Complaints will be addressed promptly with the aim of providing a formal response within two weeks. We will communicate with you openly and regularly while we work to resolve your complaint. Where appropriate, the clients/participants will be actively involved in resolving the issue. Once a resolution has been reached, we will talk with you to make sure you're satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.

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If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint, you can ask us for an internal reconsideration of our decision. We can also assist you in accessing external complaint resolution mechanisms.

Some complaints need to be managed in a different way, either because the person making a complaint has specific rights of review or because the complaint includes allegations that must be reported to an external body e.g. police

## PROCEDURE

- All clients/participants and/or their family members and representatives are informed on admission about the process for lodging a compliment or complaint.
- Our *Compliments and Complaint Handling Policy* is promoted widely within our service. Copies of our policy, procedures and relevant forms are available from our office.
- Staff have an understanding of our *Compliments and Complaint Handling Policy* and are available to assist clients/participants, their family and representatives in providing feedback to the service.
- Copies of our *Feedback Form* provide clear and accessible ways of providing feedback on the services and care provided. The forms are available in your in-home file or from our office.
- Compliments and complaints can be provided:
  - in person, verbally to Shelley Shannon or Jody Shannon (Directors) or by approaching a member of staff for assistance
  - in writing by email to [info@essentialcare.net.au](mailto:info@essentialcare.net.au)
  - by telephone on 4260 8498
  - in writing by mail to Essential Care and PO Box 3013, Brownsville.
- Complainants are encouraged to lodge their complaint in writing. This will assist with understanding the nature of the complaint and ensure that the facts provided are correct.
- Clients/Participants are able to nominate the person/care worker to assist with dealing with their complaint. This person/care worker will then be the “go between” for the client, the issue and management.
- If someone gives a verbal compliment or complaint, they should be encouraged to complete a *Feedback Form* to facilitate the tracking of feedback by the service. Alternately, staff will use the form to record verbal feedback to facilitate tracking by the service and inform continuous improvement activities.
- If a concern or complaint is minor and was addressed at the point of service, staff should record the issue and any actions taken in the in-home file and inform the office.
- Any staff member can be approached to provide compliments, to raise a concern or make a complaint. Where a staff member is not empowered to handle or resolve complaints on behalf of the service, the staff member will be able to refer the complaint to other staff and/or assist with completing forms for them.
- Any complaints received by our service are registered in One Note, acknowledged, and investigated where required. Feedback on how the complaint was managed and

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resolved is sent to the complainant once the complaint is closed. Where the complainant is not the clients/participants, the clients/participants will also be informed. Complainants have the right to lodge their complaint with an external agency including the *Aged Care Complaints Commissioner*.

- Options for internal reconsideration of decisions and external complaint resolution are offered to any complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint within the service.
- Complainants have the right to seek assistance from aged care advocacy services in raising a complaint.

### ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- Staff are responsible for reporting compliments and complaints to their supervisor before the end of their shift.
- Co-ordinators are responsible for the management of the compliments and complaints process and informing the relevant directors of any feedback received.
- Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that compliments and complaints are entered into the *Compliments and Complaints Tracker* to inform ongoing improvement activities within the service.
- Co-ordinators and Directors are responsible for analysing feedback trends for the purposes of informing continuous improvement activities within the service.

### CONFIDENTIALITY:

- All information regarding complaints will be kept confidential amongst the staff concerned with its resolution.
- Complaint documentation will be kept in a safe, locked place and accessible only to staff handling the complaint.
- Compliment and complaint information may be forwarded to the management team as part of ongoing improvement activities within the service.
- Statistics on all types of compliments and complaints will be recorded and used to inform ongoing improvement activities within the service. For this purpose, compliment and complaint information may be disseminated to management and other staff. However, the identity of the complainant or persons named in the feedback will not be disclosed.

If you are still not satisfied you can contact an external service such as:

**Department of Ageing 180020103**

**Commonwealth Ombudsman 1800362072**

**NSW Ombudsman 1800 451 524**

**NDIS 1800 800 110**

**Aged Care Complaints 1800550552**

**Department of Veterans Affairs 1300555785**