

AC01: Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy

Type	CEO	Version	1
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Background

To assist staff, care recipients and their representatives with the timely and effective management of compliments and complaints.

Scope

This policy relates to feedback arising from the Aged Care service delivery and may arise from any stakeholder including aged care service recipients, families, carers, advocates, staff, other service providers or government representatives.

Legislative and Policy References

Legislation, regulations and standards relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- NDIS practice standards set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- Aged Care Act 1997 (Cwth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)
- NDIA Terms of Business
- Australian Consumer Law

Organisational documents relevant to this policy and procedure:

- AC01.1 Feedback Form
- HR07 Compliments and Complaints Policy (general staff)
- GOV02 Code of Conduct (CEO and Staff)
- GOV07 Records and Information Management Policy

Definitions

Feedback can be positive or negative and for the purpose of this policy and procedure, is defined as an issue of a minor nature that can be resolved promptly or within 24 hours and does not require a detailed investigation.

Negative feedback includes an expression of displeasure, such as poor service, and any verbal or written complaint directly related to the service (including general and notifiable complaints) and may relate to any aspect of the service e.g., a lost clothing item or the service's fees. The issue must be dealt with as soon as is practicable to avoid escalation of the issue.

AC01: Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy

A **complaint** cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature e.g., the service is in breach of a policy or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.

The **complainant** is the individual making the complaint and may not necessarily be the person receiving care services.

Policy Objectives

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

If you are lodging a complaint about the care someone else is receiving, it is important that they or their representative know you are lodging a complaint.

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

Policy

Compliments received by the service tell us what we are doing right. Feedback and complaints received by the service are an opportunity for improvement. All feedback is taken seriously.

We will make all reasonable efforts to understand issues or concerns, and to resolve issues within the service when they arise. The timely and efficient management of complaints fosters a positive, cooperative attitude with care recipients, their representatives, visitors, volunteers, and staff.

Formal complaints will be addressed promptly with the aim of providing a formal response within 30 days. We will communicate with you openly and regularly while we work to resolve your complaint. Where appropriate, the care recipient will be actively involved in resolving the issue. Once a resolution has been reached, we will talk with you to make sure you are satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.

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.

Procedure

Information about the Policy

- All care recipients and/or their family members and representatives are informed on admission about the process for lodging feedback or complaints.
- Our *Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy* is promoted widely within our service. Copies of our policy, procedures and relevant forms are available online at www.belyuen.com.au
- Staff and volunteers understand our *Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy* and are available to assist care recipients, their family, and representatives in providing feedback to the service.
- Copies of our *Feedback Form* are easily accessible in public areas of our facilities to provide clear and accessible ways of providing feedback on the services and care provided. The forms

are available in each of our facilities and within care recipients Communication and Clients Care Note Folder.

Lodging a compliment or complaint

Feedback and complaints can be lodged:

- in person, verbally to Kelly Murphy or by approaching a member of staff for assistance
- online via www.belyuen.nt.gov.au/aged-care-service
- in writing by email to Kelly.murphy@belyuen.nt.gov.au
- by telephone on (08) 8978 5140
- in writing by mail to Belyuen Community Government Council / Aged Care Complaints, CMB18, Belyuen, NT 0801

We encourage complaints to be lodged in writing as this will help the service understand the nature of the complaint and ensure that the facts provided are correct.

Complaints will be referred to the relevant staff member for registration on our *Feedback Register*.

Complainants have the right to ask us for an internal reconsideration of decisions we have made in relation to their complaint.

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.

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 ongoing 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 *Quick Fix Form* – Forms are in the Care Recipients Communication and Client Care Note folder

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 refer the complaint to other staff and/or act as an advocate for the complainant and assist with completing forms for them.

Record Keeping

All feedback received by our service are registered on the *Feedback Register*, acknowledged, and investigated where required. Information about how the complaint was managed and resolved is sent to the complainant once the complaint is closed. Where the complainant is not the care recipient, the care recipient will also be informed.

Accountabilities

Aged Care Manager

The Aged Care Manager is responsible for:

- The management of the Feedback and Complaint process and informing the relevant manager of any feedback received.
- Ensuring all complaints are entered into the Individual *Compliant Tracker Form* to inform ongoing improvements within the service.
- Analysing feedback trends for the purposes of informing ongoing improvement activities within the service.

Aged Care Staff

All Aged Care Staff are responsible for:

- Reporting all feedback to their supervisor before the end of their shift.

Confidentiality

All information regarding feedback will be kept confidential amongst the staff concerned with its resolution.

Feedback information may be forwarded to the management team as part of ongoing improvement activities within the service.

Statistics on all types of feedback will be recorded and used to inform ongoing improvement activities within the service. For this purpose, all feedback information may be disseminated to management and other staff. However, the identity of the persons named in the feedback will not be disclosed.

Complaints Escalation and Dispute Resolution

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or grievance, they will be provided with the details of other agencies they can use to assist them to achieve a resolution. If required, and requested, staff will assist clients to access an external complaints process of their choosing. Escalated complaints will be tracked in the *Feedback Register* in the same manner as other complaints and the same communication processes as outlined above will be applied.

If necessary, the CEO will undertake communication with the complainant.

Complaints to the NDIA can be lodged by:

- email to feedback@ndis.gov.au
- phone on 1800 800 110.

Revision History

Policy Version	Approval Date	Name	Title
v.2.0	June 2018	Cathy Winsley	CEO
Rename to AC01	February 2021	Cathy Winsley	CEO

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