

Expected Outcome

The Service Stakeholders will be aware of the importance the Service places on Service User input to service. Team Members will be aware of the correct procedure to encourage feedback and complaints.

Training Requirements

All Team Members

Procedure

Feedback from Service Users is important to:

- ensure services continue to meet Service User needs; and to
- ensure adequate planning of appropriate services.

Compliments

Compliments are an important part of Service User feedback and can assist the Service to identify:

- whether service development actions have been successful;
- whether Team Members are providing quality services;
- trends in feedback;
- successes in enablement approaches to service; and
- qualitative as well as quantitative data for use in planning.

Compliments will be recorded on a Quick Compliments and Suggestion form or entered directly into the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestion Register on the computer system. As much as possible the Service User's own words should be used. All complaints are to be fully documented by an authorised Team Member and should be summarised within the Chief Executive Officer's bi-monthly report to the Governance body.

Complaints/Suggestions

An important source of feedback is Service User complaints and these are welcomed and encouraged by the Service. Team Members should check if the complaint needs to be processed in a particular way (see Complaints requiring a Specific Response below).

All Service Users will be made aware of their right to complain and the use and availability of advocates. Service Users will be assured they have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution and that they can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly, fairly and confidentially, in a safe and culturally appropriate manner. The process for making a complaint is included in the Service User Information Handbook, which is given and explained to Service Users at the time of Intake. The Chief Executive Officer will take steps to ensure Service Users feel comfortable to continue accessing the Service after making a complaint,

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Procedure 3.07-1 Service User Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions

by following up any actions with the Service Users to make sure they were happy with the process.

The Service User has the right to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf with Team Members of the Service. This may be a family member or friend, or an agency such as the Older Person's Rights Service or Disability Rights Service.

Service Users will be reminded of the complaints procedure at the time of Service Review and through Service newsletters.

Team Members will be trained to take note of Service User concerns and act promptly, so they are addressed as part of service monitoring and before concerns become complaints.

Person/s affected by the complaint will be fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to put their case.

Compliments, complaints and suggestions can be made through:

- Completing a Quick Compliments and Suggestions Form;
- Completing a Complaints Record Form;
- Contacting the Chief Executive Officer verbally or in writing;
- Responding to questionnaires and surveys;
- Attending Service User forums, meetings or planning days; or
- Contacting external complaints agencies such as:
 - The Aged Care Complaints Scheme 1800 550 552, or online at <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>
 - The NSW Ombudsman – 9286 1000, or online at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Complaints requiring a Specific Response

Concerning discrimination, abuse, neglect or exploitation by an external party or a service Team Member or other Service User -

All complaints of this nature will be dealt with as a formal complaint under the complaints process with reference to the Discrimination, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Procedure.

Complaint about a Team Member or Service User, excluding discrimination, abuse, neglect or exploitation -

The Service User is encouraged to raise their complaint with the Team Member or Service User in the first instance, if they feel comfortable about doing this.

If the Service User is not satisfied with the outcome from approaching the individual, or is not happy to discuss the issue with the person concerned, they should then contact or be referred to a Manager or Chief Executive Officer, or use an advocate to negotiate on their behalf.

Informal Complaints

Team Members should check if the complaint needs to be processed in a particular way (see Complaints requiring a Specific Response above). Informal complaints should be dealt with by the Team Member receiving the feedback, unless it involves acts of misconduct, negligence or potential breach of the Service Duty of Care to the Service User. As much as possible Service User requests for an informal complaint not to be taken further should be respected. At times a Service User making an informal complaint may wish the complaint to be discussed as a suggestion. Informal complaints/suggestions are recorded on a Quick Compliments and Suggestions Record Form and entered into the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Register.

Formal Complaints

Team Members should check if the complaint needs to be processed in a particular way (see Complaints requiring a Specific Response above). Formal complaints are recorded on a Complaints Record Form and entered into the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Register. The record form is to be completed by the Team Member receiving the complaint. Service Users are encouraged to raise their complaint with the Team Member concerned in the first instance.

Team Members who have had a concern or complaint expressed to them must document the matter on a Quick Compliments and Suggestion form or Complaints Record Form, enter it in the Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Register and also discuss matter with the Chief Executive Officer/supervisor. The Chief Executive Officer/supervisor or appropriate person will enter the details of the matter on Service User's file (electronic and/or hard copy).

If the Service User is not satisfied with the outcome negotiated with the Team Member/s or they are not happy to discuss the issue with the Team Member/s concerned, they may contact the Chief Executive Officer or use an advocate to negotiate on their behalf. The Service User's complaint will be addressed within ten (10) days of the complaint being made. The Service User will be informed of the outcome of their complaint and asked for their feedback on the complaints procedure.

If the Service User is not happy with the outcome, the Service User may raise the issue with the Governance Body Chair or the Service's Grievance Officer. The Governance Body Chair or the Service's Grievance Officer will take the complaint and investigate accordingly, keeping the Service User updated regarding progress (each 5 working days). The Governance Body Chair or the Service's Grievance Officer will inform the Chief Executive Officer of the investigations made and the Chief Executive Officer will make a determination. The Complainant will be advised of the determination in writing, within fourteen (14) days of the complaint being received by the Chairperson/Grievance Officer.

If, after approaching the above people, the issue remains unresolved, the Complainant will be referred to the Commonwealth Aged Care Complaints Line or other appropriate agency.

Confidentiality of Complaints

As far as possible, the fact that a Service User has lodged a complaint (and the details of that complaint) will be kept confidential amongst Team Members directly concerned with its resolution. The Service User's permission will be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties, where it may be desirable for those parties to be involved, in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

Dispute between Service User and Carer

If Team Members become aware of a dispute between a Service User and their carer they will refer the situation immediately to the Chief Executive Officer who will either:

1. If the dispute concerns services provided:
 - Encourage honest open discussion regarding the issue between the carer, Service User and the Service;
 - Provide the Service User and carer with clarifying information and attempt to negotiate a solution, or
 - with the Service User's permission, refer them to a mediation service.
2. If the dispute does not concern services provided:
 - Encourage honest open discussion regarding the issue between the carer and Service User; and
 - Provide support/referral to access counselling/mediation or other appropriate services, e.g. the Aged Care Assessment Team or Social Worker who will conduct Intake and offer support, or another mediation service.

Documents to be completed and/or related to this procedure

- [DOC 3.07-1-1 Complaint Record Form](#)
- [DOC 3.07-1-2 Quick Compliments and Suggestions Form](#)
- [DOC 3.07-1-3 Complaints Flowchart](#)
- [DOC 3.07-1-4 Compliments, Complaints and Suggestion Register](#)

Corresponding Policy

- [POL 3.07 Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions](#)