

POL.GOV.FAC04

Feedback and Complaints Policy

Introduction

Carers Tasmania Limited and Care to Serve Limited welcome feedback and support the right of clients and stakeholders to make a complaint and for that complaint to be addressed in a confidential, thorough, timely and comprehensive manner without bias or discrimination against any parties to the complaint. It is also recognised that positive feedback contributes to understanding where and how to improve services.

Purpose

This policy ensures that clients are able to readily provide feedback as either compliments or complaints, as part of an organisational commitment to continuous improvement.

Authorisation

This policy is issued under the authority of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO may authorise amendments to this policy at any time.

Scope

This policy is applicable to complaints from clients and stakeholders of Carers Tasmania Limited and/or Care to Serve Limited.

Definitions

Advocate	A support person and/or representative who focuses on the needs, wishes and rights of an individual.
Board	The Board of Directors formed in accordance with the Constitution.
Complainant	A person making a complaint about services or activities delivered by either organisation.
Compliment	Positive feedback received verbally or in writing about an employee or service provided by the organisation.
Complaint	Verbal or written feedback about an employee or an organisational service that is viewed as unsatisfactory by the person or organisation making the complaint.

Complaints and Accolades Register	A register of all feedback received, both internally and externally and of a positive or negative nature.
Duty of Care	Duty of Care is the requirement that the organisation or individual conducts business/ duties in a way that is considered reasonable for someone in their position to do so. Reasonable conduct may be thought of as that which is 'acceptable, average, equitable, fair, fit, honest, proper, right, tolerable or within reason'.
Employee/s	Full-time, part-time and casual contractors or subcontractors, employees of contractors or subcontractors, shift workers, apprentices or trainees, students on work experience placement and volunteers.
Unreasonable complaints	<p>Complaints which, because of their nature or frequency, raise substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for the organisation, staff, other service users and complainants or the complainant themselves. Unreasonable complaints may be divided into five categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unreasonable persistence by complainant • Unreasonable demands by complainant • Unreasonable lack of cooperation by complainant • Unreasonable arguments by complainant • Unreasonable behaviours by complainant

Policy Statement

Positive feedback

Carers Tasmania and Care to Serve value the chance to understand what clients and stakeholders find positive about services.

Received feedback will be shared with the employee concerned and with management.

Complaints

Carers Tasmania and Care to Serve seek to resolve all complaints amicably through conciliation prior to progressing to a formal complaints review process.

In the first instance, a complaint received from an individual or a stakeholder entity should be addressed at the level closest to the complainant. If the complaint is not able to be resolved to the complainants satisfaction, the complainant has the right to request review by an Executive Manager. Final consideration of a complaint would be undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer.

Complainants must be advised of their right to include an advocate and/or translator in any discussions with Carers Tasmania regarding their complaint.

Complaints must be acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt with an indicative timeframe for resolution, if the complainant provides relevant address or contact details.

Resolution should occur within a maximum of fourteen days, but preferably sooner.

Where a complaint relates to breaches of regulatory and/or legislative requirements (eg: Workplace Health and Safety) or allegations of criminal offence/s, Carers Tasmania/Care to Serve will report this to the relevant authority if required by law.

Where the complaint links to a specific employee, the principles of natural justice will be observed by informing the employee about the nature and content of any complaint about them, giving them the right to be heard by an unbiased decision-maker.

Where a complaint is considered to be unreasonable or vexatious, the Executive Manager Finance and Corporate Support is responsible for:

1. Confirming whether the complaint is unreasonable and, if so:
2. determining how to resolve the issue referencing the Tasmanian Ombudsman's Guidelines to *Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct*, and through:
 - a. escalation to a more senior organisational representative,
 - b. externally facilitated mediation.

All complaints will be managed in a structured and consistent manner, considering the input of all people involved.

Recording feedback and complaints

Positive feedback and complaints must be registered on the Complaints and Accolades Register.

Avenues for providing feedback

This policy is to be published on the websites of Carers Tasmania Limited and Care to Serve Limited. Feedback forms will be prominently displayed on both websites.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board	The Board is responsible for ensuring the continual alignment of policy and practices with current complaint requirements of Australian and Tasmanian governments.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The CEO is responsible for ensuring operational compliance with policies approved by the Board of Directors and ensuring processes, procedures and practices achieve conformance. When a complaint reaches CEO level and cannot be resolved, it is referred to the Board.

Supervisors	The relevant supervisor is responsible for this policy and relevant processes, including conducting investigations into complaints, ensuring that staff are aware of their obligations under this policy and regular reporting to the Executive Manager Finance and Corporate Support. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at Supervisor level, it is referred to the relevant manager.
Executive Manager Finance and Corporate Support (EMFCS)	This position is responsible for this policy and relevant processes, including conducting investigations into complaints, ensuring that staff are aware of their obligations under this policy and regular reporting to the CEO. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at this level, it is referred to the CEO.
Employees	All employees are required to understand & promote policy as a tool for identifying opportunities for continual improvement.

Breach of Policy

All employees are expected to conform with this policy and ensure complaints and feedback from clients and stakeholders is respectfully processed and resolved. Breaches by employees of either making or managing complaints may result in disciplinary action.

Any employee with knowledge of a breach must immediately report it to the Chief Executive Officer.

Failure to take reasonable steps to report it will result in disciplinary action for that employee.

Legislation, standards and processes

Legislation

- Privacy Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Tasmanian Ombudsman Guidelines to Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

Associated documents and processes

- Feedback and Complaints Procedure (PRO.GOV.FC01)

Alignment to standards

This policy supports the following standards:

- ISO 9000:2015 8
- Mental Health Standards 1
- Disability Service Standards 4

- Community Care Common Standards 3.3
- The Network of Carers Associations Guide to Good Practice 2.5, 5.3

Quality references

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Chief Executive Officer