

Feedback and Complaints Policy

We acknowledge, value and respect people of all cultures, sexualities, beliefs, abilities, genders, and ages, and support their rights of access, equity, and participation. We understand that carers in Tasmania, whilst sharing the common theme of caring for a family member or friend, have diverse lived and living experiences, and fundamentally we believe that carers are the experts in their own lives.

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 all feedback contributes to the continuous improvement of services and supports on offer.

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) and approved by the Board. The Board 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 Register	A register of complaints and feedback received, both internally and externally.
Compliments Register	A register of compliments received, both internally and externally.
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, volunteers and Directors.
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
QMS	Quality Management System is defined as a formalised system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives.

Policy Statement

Positive feedback/Compliments

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

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

Complaints

Carers Tasmania and Care to Serve seek to resolve all complaints amicably through reconciliation 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 satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant has the right to request a review by a Team Leader or 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/Care to Serve regarding their complaint.

All written complaints must be acknowledged in writing within three working days of receipt, with an indicative timeframe for resolution. If the complainant does not provide or we do not have current contact details on file, verbal contact will be made to confirm acknowledgement of the complaint and a request for contact details for future communications.

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), allegations of criminal offence/s including child harm or abuse, Carers Tasmania/Care2Serve will report this to the relevant authority as 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 the complaint, giving them the right to be heard by an unbiased decision-maker.

Where a complaint is considered to be unreasonable or vexatious, the relevant Executive Manager 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 the CEO,
 - 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

Compliments and complaints must be registered via the relevant register on the QMS in SharePoint.

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.
Executive Managers	These positions are responsible for 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 and promote this policy as a tool for identifying opportunities for continual improvement.

Breach of Policy

All employees are expected to conform with this policy. In proven instances where employees or management do not abide by the policy, disciplinary action may result.

Legislation, standards and processes

Legislation

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997

Associated documents and processes

- Feedback and Complaints Procedure
- Royal Commission's recommended Child Safe Standards

Tasmanian Ombudsman Guidelines to Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

- QMS Registers Administrators Manual

Alignment to standards

This policy supports the following standards:

- Aged Care Quality Standards 6
- DHHS Quality & Safety Standards 4

- Child Safe Organisations National Principles
- ISO 9001:2016 4.4; 8.2.2; 9.1.2
- National Standards for Mental Health Services 1, 3
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 1, 2
- ASES Standards Certificate Level 2022
- Rainbow Tick Standards

Quality references

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Authorising Officer

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