



16. Complaints and Client Feedback

Reviewed 2nd April 2017

Complaints and Client feedback are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution.

A complaint or feedback is received from a client

Staff are trained in the feedback and complaints processes

Complaints are documented on a Complaint Form and feed into the continuous improvement process

Complaints are dealt with following the process for managing complaints described in this section

An appeals process is enacted if required

Feedback is documented on an Improvement log and feeds into the continuous improvement process and/ or in client progress notes

Complaints and feedback processes are regularly audited

Letter, email, Client Complaint Form, telephone or face to face

FORMS AND RECORDS

Client Handbook	Shared Drive
Client Consent	Client records

All Policies and Procedures with Section 16 have been approved by General Manager and Management Committee.

Signed

General Manager

Signed

Executive Member on behalf

16.1 Client Complaints

A complaint is dissatisfaction with some aspect of Charlestown Caring Group Inc. service provision. Clients are encouraged to express their complaints to enable us to improve the quality of our support. We utilise the *Better Practice Guide to Complaints Handling in Aged Care Services* to guide our management of complaints and record complaints on Client complaint form

In dealing with complaints:

- Clients are made aware, through the Client Handbook, of their right to complain without fear of retribution, the complaints process and their right to use an advocate in making a complaint. This information is explained to clients at the time of assessment and review.
- Clients have a right to complain and will be supported in making their complaint without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly in a manner which is non-threatening.
- Clients can expect staff to take steps to ensure that they feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.
- Clients are also advised that they can nominate a complaint contact person and where possible, this person will be allocated the complaint.
- Clients are informed of how the complaint will be dealt with, and whether it needs to be managed in a particular 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. For example, criminal allegations should be reported to the police.
- All complaints and the details of the complaint will be kept confidential, and information relative to the complaint will only be shared with others who are directly concerned with the resolution of the complaint. To maintain confidentiality all records and documentation are securely stored
- All feedback from the complaint is used to improve our service delivery and forms part of our continuous improvement processes which underpin all of our services and operations. Our complaints handling approach reflects our vision, objectives and philosophy outlined in Section 1: Corporate Governance.

16.1.1 Process for Managing Complaints

Step	Timeline
1. A complaint is received via a staff member or directly from a Client/representative via letter, email, face to face or telephone.	On day complaint is received
2. A <u>Client Complaint Form</u> is created by the person receiving the complaint and the complaint is reported to the operations Manager or General Manager	

Step	Timeline
<p>3. The complaint is reviewed by the Operations Manager and relevant information and proposed action is recorded and a complaint contact person is assigned taking into account the person’s preference and the unique nature of the complaint</p>	<p>Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint</p>
<p>4. The Operations Manager forwards an overview of the complaint and recommended action to the General Manager for review and input</p>	
<p>5. The Operations Manager informs the General Manager of any complaints involving alleged criminal action or which may result in adverse public relations or may require handling in a particular way (criminal allegations should be reported to the Police) as well as the Board</p>	
<p>6. The Operations Manager contacts (by telephone, in person or letter) the client to identify any support, cultural or linguistic that they need to understand and participate in the complaints process and to advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complaint is being assessed • the process that is followed including confidentiality and any particular actions due to the nature of the complaint • the timeline • their right to a staff contact person of their choosing and the agreed contact person and their contact details • their right to an advocate and advocacy agency support (see Section 17: Advocacy) • their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman • when they will be contacted again. 	<p>Within 4 working days of receipt of complaint</p>
<p>7. The General Manager is updated about the progress to action the complaint and the proposed action/plan is agreed. Investigation principles include: impartiality, confidentiality, transparency and timeliness.</p>	<p>Within 15 working days of receipt of complaint</p>
<p>8. Action is carried out, including providing an apology to the complainant if appropriate.</p>	

Step	Timeline
Person/s affected by the complaint are fully informed of all facts through ongoing updates on progress of the complaint and are given the opportunity to provide further information and contribute to the solutions	
9. The client is advised of the actions taken to address the issues raised and the outcome of the complaint in a letter	
10.If the client is not satisfied with the outcome they are advised of the complaints appeal process (see Section 17: Advocacy).	
11.If the client wishes to appeal, the complaint is reviewed by the General Manager, whose decision is final	
12.The client is advised of the General Manager’s decision and of their option to go to an advocacy agency (see Section 17: Advocacy).	Within 25 working days of receipt of complaint
13.When the complaint is finalised a staff person is identified by the Operations Manager to make sure that the client feels comfortable to continue accessing the service and to obtain feedback on the complaints procedure. The complaint is then closed out.	
14.The Board of management is updated about all complaints at each Board meeting.	
	Next Board meeting

16.1.2 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

The Board is provided with information on the type and number of complaints at each Board meeting and information on trends when adequate information is available: The Board ensures:

- Appropriate corrective and/or remedial action is considered, agreed and implemented.
- Decisions reached as a result of the complaint review process are documented and records of implementation and follow up are maintained
- The implications of the complaints are considered in service planning.

16.1.2B EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

If a client chooses to complain to an external agency they are free to do so and Charlestown Caring Group will support them as required. Agencies that clients can lodge a complaint with include:

- Through the feedback facility at the Department of Health web site (www.doh.gov.au)
- By email to the Department of Health at DoHfeedback@doh.gov.au
- The Aged Care Complaints Scheme (<http://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au/>) or by telephone on 1800 550 552
- Other contacts detailed in Section 17 Advocacy.

16.2 Client Feedback

Feedback can be positive and negative. Negative feedback is defined as minor dissatisfaction or a minor issue that can be easily resolved and/or the client does not want to make a formal complaint. For example, feedback on an occasion of late service provision or dissatisfaction with a provided meal. These are still recorded on a complaint form as the incident is important to the client and improvements may be made. Positive feedback is a compliment or praise regarding service delivery, staff or the organisation. Feedback can be formal or informal, these are noted in the Compliments Register.

16.2.1 FORMAL FEEDBACK

Formal feedback is given with the intention of providing feedback such as a client completing an Improvement log, survey or specifically informing a staff member about their dissatisfaction.

When feedback is not written on a set form the staff member receiving it completes a form and attaches any documentation.

16.2.2 INFORMAL FEEDBACK

Informal feedback is made in the course of interaction, for example, a client quipping to the bus driver that the outing location was unsatisfactory.

16.2.3 DISPUTES BETWEEN CLIENTS AND STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

Charlestown Caring Group Inc. Staff/volunteers are required to report immediately to the Operations Manager any dispute with clients, regardless of how small. Disputes are reported verbally in the first instance.

The Operations Manager then decides:

- Whether the client should be contacted
- If a written report is required
- The format of the report
- Any other action to resolve the dispute as early as possible.

The Operations Manager may offer the client the opportunity to make a formal complaint. If the client accepts this offer the Operations Manager completes a Complaint Form and the complaints process is followed.

16.2.4 USE OF AN ADVOCATE

Clients are advised that they can use an advocate at any point in the feedback or complaints process or if they feel their feedback or complaint was not satisfactorily resolved. They are also advised of relevant agencies as described in Section 17: Advocacy.

16.3 People with Special Needs

Where Clients may have special needs, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds LGBTI or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Operations Manager ensures that any cultural aspects are considered when reviewing a complaint or dispute and ensures the person feels comfortable in discussing a dispute. The presence of a family member or friend or the support of an interpreter may be required.

The Operations Manager also ensures that any actions, interventions or referrals are appropriate to people from special needs groups. This may require the involvement of organisations with expertise in special needs groups either in providing advice or assisting in actions.

16.4 Confidentiality of Complaints and Disputes

As far as possible, the fact that a client has lodged a complaint and the details of that complaint are kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The client's permission is obtained prior to any information being given to other parties that it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint or dispute.

16.5 Monitoring the Complaints and Client Feedback Process

Feedback and complaints processes and systems are regularly audited as part of the Charlestown Caring Group Inc. audit program and staff, clients and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback on issues and areas where improvements