

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>Consumer Policy - Consumer Complaints</b> |
|--|--|

|  |
|--|
| <b>Applies to:</b> Clients and Carer Support Staff |
| <b>Specific responsibility:</b> CEO                |
| <b>Board Endorsement:</b> 31/10/2019               |

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Version:</b> 5                   |
| <b>Date created:</b> 31/10/2019     |
| <b>Next review date:</b> 31/10/2020 |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Policy context:</b> This policy relates to: |  |
| Standards or other external requirements       |  |
| Legislation or other requirements              |  |
| Contractual obligations                        |  |

## Consumer Policy - Consumer Complaints

### Definitions

*Complaint:* is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation regarding its staff, services or products that warrants response or resolution.

*Complainant:* is an employee, client, advocate, entity or member of the public who expresses their dissatisfaction about an organisation to either the organisation itself or an external body.

*Escalation:* is the process of reporting complaints to an external body if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

### Policy

- Carer Support is committed to the prompt resolution of grievances or complaints raised by consumers and/or care recipients. Carer Support strives to be a consumer-driven organisation providing high quality service and support.
- Carer Support is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using the services of Carer Support or are affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation. All concerns that are raised will be addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.
- Carer Support understands that mistakes and errors of judgment can occur and consumers and care recipients are encouraged to comment on or raise concerns about the organisation with the assurance that their complaint will be treated confidentially and without retribution of any kind.
- For internal complaints, this Policy should be read in conjunction with the Grievance Policy. The principles of due process and transparency which apply to the grievance policy also apply to this Policy.

### **Carer Support will provide a complaints and appeals management procedure that:**

- allows any person to make a complaint or provide feedback
- facilitates complaints by cultivating a supportive environment in which they can be made
- is simple, accessible and easy to use
- is effectively communicated and promoted to all clients and stakeholders
- is proportionate to the size of the organisation and the services it provides
- ensures complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with legislative requirements

### **Principles**

Carer Support will:

- ensure that all clients, and their families, carers and advocates are encouraged and supported to raise any concerns they have about the service or organisation
- consider all complaints it receives regardless of whether or not the complainant is a client of the organisation
- treat all complainants with respect, recognising that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant
- maintain confidentiality of parties involved, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution. Information will only be disclosed if required by law, or if otherwise necessary
- ensure support and advocacy is available to clients who make a complaint and require support
- resolve complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant
- clients, families and advocates have access to the organisation's complaints management policy
- deal with all complaints in a timely manner, and aim to provide a formal response to the complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being received
- keep parties to the complaint appropriately involved and informed of progress of the complaint
- ensure that Board members, staff and volunteers are given information about the complaints procedure as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing client feedback and complaints
- ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures
- ensure that all complainants are aware of and understand how to escalate their complaint
- ensure that a complainant is not penalised in any way or prevented from use of services during the progress of an issue
- ensure that feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in organisational reviews and in planning service improvements
- review and evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of the complaints management system and continually improve its processes
- inform the Board of Directors of any complaints that are received in regard to Carer Support services and the actions taken to resolve it
- ensure the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring the effective management of the Complaints Policy

## Procedure

When a complaint is made to any Staff Member or Volunteer of Carer Support the following process should be observed:

1. All complaints should attempt to be resolved as close to the source as possible. Specifically, the consumer or care recipient should be encouraged to speak with the staff member concerned in the first instance. It is recognised and accepted however that dependent upon the nature of the complaint this aspect of the process may not be able to be initiated.
2. If there is an unsatisfactory resolution to this, the complainant should be directed to speak with the CEO. At this point the concerns being raised should be recorded in note form by the CEO receiving the complaint. This will ensure that all the issues raised by the complainant are able to be properly understood. The CEO would then investigate the complaint and develop strategies to resolve it. The CEO would advise the staff member involved in the complaint of the matter and its resolution. The staff member is to initiate any actions required to ensure the satisfactory resolution of the complaint.
3. If the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied with the outcome to date they are able to make contact with the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to discuss the matter further. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors will undertake a full investigation of the matter contacting all relevant parties and developing strategies to ensure a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.
4. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the a result of their complaint, they have the right to appeal the decision to an External Agency, (as listed below) to assist in the resolution of the complaint:

### External Agencies

- Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme  
Ph 1800 550 552
- Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc  
Ph 8232 5377
- Department of Social Services  
<https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/complaints-page>
- Disability Advocacy and Complaints Services of SA  
Ph 7122 6030
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner  
Ph 8226 8666
- Aged Care Complaints Commissioner  
Ph 1800 550 552

## DOCUMENTATION

| <b>Documents related to this policy</b>                 |                                    |                 |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Related policies  | Grievances in the Workplace Policy |                 |
| Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents |                                    |                 |
| <b>Reviewing and approving this policy</b>              |                                    |                 |
| <b>Frequency</b>  | <b>Person responsible</b>          | <b>Approval</b> |
| Annually  | CEO                                | Board           |

| <b>Policy review and version tracking</b> |                      |                         |                        |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Review</b>                             | <b>Date Approved</b> | <b>Approved by</b>      | <b>Next Review Due</b> |
| 1   | 2012                 | Chief Executive Officer | 1/9/2014               |
| 2   | 2015                 | Chief Executive Officer | 1/9/2016               |
| 3   | 2016                 | Chief Executive Officer | 1/9/2017               |
| 4   | 2017                 | Chief Executive Officer | 14/2/2018              |
| 5   | 2018                 | Chief Executive Officer | 14/2/2019              |
| 6   | 31/10/2019           | Carer Support Board     | 31/10/2020             |