

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Purpose

Carer Solutions Australia (**CSA**) is committed to providing a professional and high-quality service to its clients (**Partners**). CSA genuinely welcomes any feedback, including complaints, as it helps to positively influence service delivery and helps CSA better meet the needs of its Partners.

This Policy is intended to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Further to this, CSA aims to facilitate regular review of its processes to identify any systemic issues which need to be addressed, and continuously improve the safety and quality of CSA's services.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all CSA staff receiving or managing complaint feedback regarding CSA's service delivery, including how a previous complaint has been handled, and regardless of:

- *How* the feedback is given (e.g. phone, email, website, etc.); or
- *Who* gives the feedback (e.g. Partner, primary contact, guardian, support worker, family member, member of the public, etc.).

The feedback we want to capture and act on is **any expression of dissatisfaction with CSA's services**.

3. Policy Statement

CSA has an ongoing commitment to respecting the rights of people with disability. This means that, where a person with disability is affected by an issue raised in a complaint, their input will be sought and valued.

To this end, CSA will ensure that both the person who makes the complaint (**Complainant**) and any person/s with disability affected by the complaint will be:

- Appropriately involved in the resolution of the complaint; and

- Kept informed of the progress of the complaint, including:
 - any action taken;
 - the reasons for decisions made; and
 - options to have decisions reviewed, both internally and externally.

CSA will ensure that people making a complaint or affected by issues raised in a complaint are not adversely affected as a result. CSA will also provide for anonymity where it is preferred by the Complainant, with the understanding that this may affect how thoroughly the issue can be investigated and resolved.

CSA is committed to ensuring that every part of the complaint process is easy and accessible to all members of the public. This includes providing any additional support necessary for a person to make, resolve or escalate complaints as they choose.

4. Feedback and Complaints Procedure

The five key stages in CSA's complaint management system are set out in the procedures below.

4.1 Lodging a Complaint

In addition to liaising with an existing point of contact at CSA, a complaint can be made by:

- Calling us on 1300 729 839;
- Emailing us at care@carersolutions.com.au;
- Writing to Carer Solutions Australia at Suite 8, 23-25 Gipps Street, Collingwood VIC 3066; or
- Filling out the 'Contact Us' form at www.carersolutions.com.au/contact.

Complainants are welcome to have an advocate or someone to support them or act on their behalf in lodging a complaint.

4.2 Receiving a Complaint

All staff are responsible for receiving and handling complaints, including taking actions to resolve complaints. Where possible, complaints will be resolved by the person who receives the complaint (**Complaint First Contact**). Where a complaint cannot be resolved by the Complaint First Contact, the complaint will be assigned to a relevant team member.

Where complaints relate to the suspicion, allegation, or occurrence of an incident or reportable incident, the Incident Management Policy must be read alongside this Policy.

When complaints are received, the Complaint First Contact will:

- Record all details of the complaint in CSA's customer relationship management system, including involved parties, the circumstances from which the complaint arose, outcomes sought and contact information of the Complainant;

- Provide an acknowledgement either verbally or in writing of the complaint to the Complainant within 2 business days (or within 1 business day where there is an allegation, suspicion or occurrence of a reportable incident);
- Where there is uncertainty, ambiguity, or a need for further information, clarify with the Complainant;
- Provide details on the complaint handling process; and
- Begin handling the complaint where appropriate.

4.3 Investigating a Complaint

CSA will undertake an investigation to determine the circumstances from which the complaint arose and what actions are required in response. As part of this investigation, CSA will undertake steps including:

- Reviewing events that preceded the complaint arising;
- Reviewing current processes;
- Investigating claims made in the complaint;
- Discussing the situation with various staff as well as the Complainant and/or the Partner; as well as
- Other steps as discussed with the Complainant and/or the Partner.

Matters CSA will consider in determining how a complaint will be managed include:

- The seriousness of the complaint;
- Whether there are concerns about health and safety to a person;
- The impact on the Partner and/or the Complainant;
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations; and
- Whether the complaint is directly about CSA's Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**).

Throughout the investigation, CSA will keep the Complainant and the Partner regularly updated on progress and any actions taken, as well as considering their views through the investigatory process.

4.4 Mandatory Reporting of Complaint-Related Matters

Importantly, CSA personnel handling the complaint will assess whether the complaint raised constitutes a reportable incident, as defined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (**NDIS Commission**), or other relevant State or Territory legislation. Briefly, these include instances of abuse, neglect, and/or violence. Where they do constitute a reportable incident, further steps will need to be taken, including reporting the incident to external bodies, such as the NDIS Commission.

Further information on the handling of reportable incidents can be found in CSA's Incident Management Policy.

4.5 Addressing a Complaint

Once information from the investigation has been thoroughly assessed and analysed, CSA should be in a position to take action to address a complaint. Actions taken will be based on evidence, and address the issues raised by the Complainant and/or the Partner.

In the process of addressing the complaint, CSA will undertake any reasonable steps discussed with the Complainant or Partner.

Options for appropriate actions may include, but not limited to:

- Explaining CSA's process(es) that led to the complaint;
- Re-training or further training of CSA's employees;
- Disciplinary action against employees involved in the complaint;
- Providing information to you relevant to the complaint;
- Changes to how supports or services are provided;
- Development or enhancement of policies or procedures;
- Offering you an apology; or
- Ongoing monitoring of the issue.

Following CSA's response, CSA may, where appropriate and/or necessary, contact relevant third parties, including the following:

- NDIS Commission;
- Police (such as if the complaint is related to the commitment of a criminal offence);
- Commission for Children and Young People (Victoria) if the complaint (or allegation) is one of the five types of reportable conduct activities related to children; and/or
- Other relevant third parties.

5. Internal Review and Escalation Process

Where the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, or where they do not feel comfortable in making a complaint to those directly involved, they will be advised of their options for review.

Complainants have a right to escalate their complaint to the Manager of Compliance, Senior Manager and/or the CEO (or the Leadership Team if the complaint is regarding the CEO) if the circumstances didn't warrant it in the first instance.

Wherever possible, complaints should be dealt with by the staff members of the team involved. However, for serious matters, or matters with broad implications, a manager may participate in the complaints investigation/resolution process.

6. External Review

If Complainants are dissatisfied with the final resolution offered by CSA, they can further their complaint to an external agency. These include:

<p>Nationwide (all states)</p>	<p>NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Phone: 1800 035 544 TTY: 133 677 Website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints</p> <p><u>Commonwealth Ombudsman</u> Phone: 1300 362 072 Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au</p>
<p>TAS</p>	<p>Ombudsman Tasmania Phone: 1800 001 170 Website: www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au</p>
<p>VIC</p>	<p><u>Ombudsman Victoria</u> Phone: 1800 806 314 Website: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au</p> <p><u>Consumer Affairs Victoria</u> Phone: 1300 558 181 Website: www.consumer.vic.gov.au</p> <p><u>Disability Services Commissioner</u> Phone: 1800 677 342 Website: www.odsc.vic.gov.au</p> <p><u>Mental Health Complaints Commissioner</u> Phone: 1800 246 054 Website: www.mhcc.vic.gov.au</p>
<p>NSW</p>	<p><u>NSW Ombudsman</u> Phone: 1800 451 524 Website: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au</p> <p><u>Fair Trading NSW</u> Phone: 133 220 Website: www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>QLD</p>	<p><u>Queensland Ombudsman</u> Phone: 1800 068 908 Website: www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au</p> <p><u>Fair Trading Queensland</u> Phone: 137 468 Website: www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading</p>

WA	<p><u>Health and Disability Services Complaints Office</u> Phone: 1800 813 583 Website: www.hadscow.wa.gov.au</p> <p><u>Western Australia Department of Communities</u> Phone: 08 6167 8997 Website: http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-service-providers/</p> <p><u>Western Australia Consumer Protection</u> Phone: 1300 304 054 Website: https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection</p>
Interpreter	<p>If the Complainant needs interpreting services:</p> <p><u>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)</u> Phone: 131 450</p>

7. Record Keeping

CSA will keep comprehensive records about:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Any action taken to resolve the complaint;
- Any amendments to policies or procedures to prevent similar situations from reoccurring; and
- The outcome of any action taken.

Records will be kept for 7 years from the date the record was made. For children, the records will be retained until they attain the age of 25 years old.

CSA may be required to provide information about complaints to the NDIS Commission or other external bodies, on request.

8. Continuous Improvement

CSA will ensure that feedback and complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can easily be retrieved for reporting and analysis. Reports will be conducted regularly to:

- Capture the number, nature and outcome of complaints;
- Review issues raised in complaints and subsequent actions taken to resolve them;
- Distil and learn from Partners' collective feedback on the effectiveness of CSA's complaints management system;

- Identify and address systemic issues; and
- Monitor requests for internal and/or external review of CSA's complaint handling.

These reports will consider both complaints resolved at the first point of contact and complaints requiring follow-up. Reviewing these will put CSA in a strong position to improve its services and processes, including the complaints management system itself.

9. Compliments and Suggestions

CSA appreciates feedback of all forms, including positive feedback. If there is a compliment for a specific staff member or team, the compliment will be passed on so that they can be recognised for their service. If a compliment relates to a product or service, the feedback will be passed onto the appropriate department to help them focus on what works well for Partners and other stakeholders.

Suggestions for improvements, even if they aren't complaint-related, are also always welcome, and helps drive continuous improvement.

10. Policy Review

This Feedback and Complaints Policy will be reviewed regularly by the Manager of Compliance. For any further information about this Policy, please contact the Manager of Compliance on:

Manager of Compliance

compliance@carersolutions.com.au

1300 729 839

Last Reviewed:	11/10/2020	Approved by:	CEO
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