

Policy on Member Feedback and Complaint

Date adopted.....04/06/2018.....

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MEMBER FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

INTRODUCTION

OptimumChoice will conduct its business honestly and ethically. We will constantly improve the quality of our services and create a reputation for honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, integrity, trust, and sound business judgment.

PRINCIPLES

OptimumChoice was established for the purpose of providing quality services to improve the lives of people with disabilities where their individuality recognised, and their safety is paramount.

The Organisations' complaint handling processes are consistent with current complaint handling standards.

Complaint handling processes will be consistent with the Principles and Objectives of the **Disability Services Act (1993)** and the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (2013)**

GUIDELINES

OptimumChoice operates the criteria set out by **Complaints Handling Standards Australia (AS 4269-1995); Disability Services Standards; Standard 7 of the Complaints and Disputes and the Customer Service Complaint Handling Checklist** into its complaints handling procedures.

Feedback and complaints system demonstrates that:

- Management and staff are committed to its effectiveness
- The complainant and respondent are treated fairly
- Sufficient resources are available

- Procedures for feedback, including the right to complain, are publicised;
- The complaints procedure is easily accessed
- Staff ,management and clients who wish to complain have assistance and help from the advocate of their choice
- Staff respond courteously to feedback and complaints within two working days
- Appropriate remedies are available

OptimumChoice will:

- Collect non-identifying data on clients complaints and feedback
- Use the information to identify underlying causes of client and staff complaints
- Correct any problems and improve the quality of our services
- Recognise that there may be barriers discouraging members to provide feedback and complaints.

Take the complainant's perspective into account by:

- Ensuring that the complainant does not deal with staff/employees involved in the problem
- Enabling members to choose from several feedback procedures
- Ensuring that the person's disability does not prevent them from using the organisation's feedback system
- Declaring a single tier system
- Reviewing the complaints and feedback procedures regularly with staff.

At the resolution of each complaint, inform all parties about the relevant review processes, especially the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity's responsibility under Part 6 of the Disability Services Act (1993).

After that, the Organisation will conduct an Annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey to ensure that staff perspective has been heard and taken into account. The outcome of the survey and adopted strategy will be reported to the Management on completion.

STAFF PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

OptimumChoice empowers all staff to handle consumer service problems. Responsibility for staff feedback and complaints is the duty statement of the Manager's position in reviewing any unresolved problems.

All staff working for OptimumChoice are expected to listen courteously to management and staff concerns and problems, with the service quality outputs and do what they can to correct deficiencies.

Where clients contact staff and staff are unable to resolve the problem, they are to ask the client if they would like to investigate the problem formally. If the client says no, the staff member must continue to try to resolve the problem. If the client says yes, the staff member must inform the client that the Manager is responsible for service problems and will contact the client directly to schedule an appointment within two working days.

RECEIVING CONSUMER FEEDBACK

Feedback, including complaints, may be referred to the Manager by:

- Referral from staff
- Personal contact with the client, family member or carer
- A telephone call from the client, family member or carer
- Referral from another agency.

CLARIFICATION OF NATURE OF COMPLAINT

- The Manager is to contact the complainant and schedule an appointment for a home visit for an initial interview with the complainant
- Review the relevant files and documents to derive the necessary background to understanding the clients problem
- At the initial interview, the nominated Complaints Officer will use active listening skills and minimal prompts to encourage the complainant to explain the nature of the complaint. The complaint will be discussed in full, asking questions to clarify the exact nature of the complaint
- The Manager will restate the detailed complaint and clarify that the details are correct
- The Complaints Officer will record the action which will correct the problem for the complainant
- In the case of a complex complaint, two interviews may be necessary to formalise the complaint
- The Complaints Officer is then to explain to the complainant:
 - How the matter will be investigated
 - That a resolution is usually needed to be negotiated by all parties
 - Any limitations on part to resolve the complaint

- Statutory limits to provide the preferred resolution
- The feedback procedure.
- The Manager is to inform the complainant of all updates to the complaints procedure.

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT

- The Manager will interview the respondent and any staff involved in the complaint
- The Manager will collate all materials and prepare a response letter and review the complaint with the Management. At the agreed appointment time, the Manager will report the response to the client or provide a progress report
- If the complainant agrees that the proposed resolution will finalise the complaint, the Manager will approve the draft letter to the complainant, ensuring that the complainant is satisfied thereby avoiding internal and external appeals
- Initiate remedial action. Often all that is needed is a simple apology and an assurance that the same thing will not happen again and to advise the respondent in writing and advise of the complainants right to refer the matter to the **Commissioner for Equal Opportunity under Part 6 of the Disability Services Act (1993)**
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution offered, the Manager will schedule an appointment for a progress report
- Then consider seeking advice from an independent impartial person with complaints knowledge, without breaching the client confidentiality. Either revise the original resolution or repeat the original resolution to the complainant. If no further

action is deemed necessary to resolve the complaint, advise the complainant that a resolution cannot be reached and advise the complainant in writing about accessing Part 6 of the **Disability Services Act (1993)** and the names of skilled advocates.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- The Manager enters the complaint and outcome in a complaints log book for future analysis
- Complaints data, not identifying complainants or staff member respondents, to be referred to the Management of the Organisation for consideration on service outputs improvement
- Request information from the client about client satisfaction with the feedback and complaints procedures to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its procedures on an annual basis.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

Your Feedback is Important

We believe that people with disabilities should have access to quality services. If you believe that our service is sub-standard, please advise this office to enhance our review processes and to enhance our ability to improve our service outputs.

You can help us to improve the quality of our service outputs in several ways:

- Informally advise the person who provided the service. They may not even be aware that you were dissatisfied. It is often easier to deal with problems at their source.

- If you wish to ask to investigate the problem for you, please follow the following feedback procedures:
 - You may contact the Manager in requesting an interview to review the complaint. The contact number is 0430 374 409.
 - You will need to explain the nature of the complaint, why it is a problem for you and what you would like to do to resolve the problem. The Manager will organise an appointment with you to report on the results of the investigations into the complaint
 - The Manager will confer with the respondent(s). All dealings will be treated as confidential and discussed only with people directly involved in the complaint process.
 - The Manager will contact you to provide a progress report on what can do to resolve the complaint.
- You may also lodge a formal complaint about the service with the **Commissioner for Equal Opportunity** under **Part 6, Disability Services Act (1993)**. You can obtain copies of the brochure called
- **NDIS Act (2013)**
- **Disability Services Complaints** explaining this procedure at all of The Agency's service outlets.
- You will be asked to complete an Annual Satisfaction Survey. Your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated and valued. It will enhance and or improve the maintenance of your housing and or your service delivery through improved support.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that

the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy shall be reviewed immediately.