

DOCUMENT	COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE
AREA	SERVICES

1. Purpose

Carers SA is committed to providing high quality services to carers as an organisation standard. Carers SA welcomes compliments, comments and complaints about any aspect of the organisation and commits to respond to issues promptly, confidentially and appropriately and in a fair, effective and consistent manner.

As part of our ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement process, Carers SA utilises a formal compliments, comments and complaints process where we actively seek feedback on our services and interactions with carers and other key stakeholders.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Carers SA Staff, which includes all workers (including full-time, part-time and casual), students on work experience placement, volunteers and Board Directors. Stakeholders include contractors, 3rd party providers and workplace participants. For the purposes of this policy, the above will collectively be referred to as Staff.

3. Policy

- Carers SA values all compliments, comments and complaints from carers, and other key stakeholders as an important mechanism to improve the quality-of-service delivery and overall organisational engagement.
- Carers SA staff will conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner at all times when dealing with compliments, comments and complaints. Any person may make a complaint or provide comments or compliments about any aspect of Carers SA services or programs.
- The Carers SA compliments, comments and complaints process is transparent and available via the Carers SA website. Further, compliments, comments and complaints may be lodged via telephone, post, email or in person.
- Carers are informed of this process through the Carer Information pack sent to them as part of intake and registration when first engaging with Carers SA.
- Carers and other stakeholders have the right to expect that their complaint or formal comment requiring action will be dealt with appropriately.
- Carers SA will maintain communication with carers or other relevant stakeholder throughout the process including acknowledgement, information about expected timeframes and outcomes.
- Carers SA utilise different formal processes to invite carer and other stakeholder feedback, monitor carer satisfaction and respond to opportunities to improve carer services and organisational engagement.
- A staff member has the right to be advised immediately (as soon as practicable) of a complaint or formal comment regarding them.
- Carers SA in its commitment to providing safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults have a zero tolerance to complaints and comments involving harm or risk of harm and these will be managed in line with the Carers SA Child and Young Person Safety Reporting Procedure and Incident Management Procedure.
- Carers and other stakeholders have the right to submit compliments, comments and complaints anonymously.
- A well managed and transparent compliments, comments and complaints handling process improves services, and helps identify and mitigate poor processes, practices and risks.

Definitions

Complaints:

- A complaint is an **“expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint,** where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required”
- Complaints may be made formally or informally.

Comment

- a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction.
- information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement
- Comments like complaints, may constitute remedial action and investigation.

Compliment

- a polite expression of praise or admiration.

4. Gathering Feedback

How we collect Carer and other stakeholder Feedback (compliments, comments and complaints).

Carer /Stakeholder Feedback	
General feedback	<p>Staff hear or receive compliments, comments and complaints through several channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - via email, - phone - face to face. - Carers SA social media /digital platforms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to confirm if the person would like this documented formally. • If the carer/stakeholder would like this documented formally then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Document the compliment, comment or complaint on Carers SA Triple C register. ○ Where a carer /stakeholder may not want a formal complaint processed Staff may progress this as a comment which still may require follow up action as would be the case with a formal complaint. <p>For complaints and comments that require some form of response and action - complete the Feedback and Complaints Form and forward to your Team Leader or Program Manager.</p>
	<p>Carer Satisfaction surveys are sent to carers at regular intervals to gauge satisfaction with Carer Gateway services as a whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These surveys are sent to carers to reveal overall satisfaction with services and supports. • These surveys are sent electronically from the CRM (in full) at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3-month review ○ Annual review. • Responses to these surveys are automatically uploaded into a carers file. <p>These results are then reported anonymously to DSS through Carers SA Dex and partnership approach reporting.</p>

Carer Packages Brokered Services feedback	<p>Carers SA invites feedback from carers concerning Carer Gateway services and brokered carer packages when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respite is provided for the first time • Respite is provided by a different organisation/facility • A different type of respite is provided e.g. a carer who has had only in-home respite is provided with a residential respite service. • After the 3-month review, and annually
Peer Group Carer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on Peer Groups is gathered using surveys. • Peer Group Staff invite carers to complete Participant surveys at completion of sessions 1,2 3 . • Feedback is gathered at the completion of Session 4 in line with Peer Group guidelines. • Carers can complete the surveys either electronically or in paper format.
Coaching feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on coaching is gathered using surveys • Carers are invited to complete these surveys at the end of their coaching sessions. • Carers can complete the surveys either electronically or in paper format.
Counselling feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carer Counselling Program seeks carer counselling satisfaction through surveys. • This survey is sent electronically to carers after the last individual counselling session • Carers can complete the surveys either electronically or in paper format at the end of the counselling sessions.
Survey Results	<p>Program managers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring, - following up on any complaints or comments of concern and - reporting on the results of the surveys from each of the service types.

Monitoring of Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints and Concerns

In line with Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Carers SA staff are required to report any suspicion based on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of being harmed.

As part of Carers SA's commitment to ensuring that safe environments are created to support the safety, wellbeing and participation of children and young people, refer to the Children and Young Person Safety Policy and Child and Young Person Reporting Procedure.

All Urgent Complaints or Concerns regarding a child or young person, are considered an Incident and must be reported and managed through the Incident Management Procedure and Reporting process.

Refer to Child and Young Person Reporting Procedure.

Refer to Incident Management Procedure.

5. Complaints Handling

Complaints and formal comments (requiring action) handling timeframes

URGENT complaints/comments	<p>Examples may include:</p> <p>Complaints or comments about brokered services that have not arrived, and the care recipient is without support. These should be responded to immediately.</p> <p>Where the complaint could affect the health, safety and welfare of the carer or another person i.e., personal safety including physical, sexual or emotional abuse this should be considered an incident and an investigation must commence immediately and be resolved within one (1) working day.</p> <p>Refer to Client Incident Management Procedure and Reporting Form</p>
Complaints/comments regarding Harm or Risk of Harm of a Child	<p>Any complaint that includes harm or risk of harm to a child is to be reported in accordance with Carers SA zero tolerance position, the Children and Young Person Safety Policy and reporting procedures.</p> <p>If the complaint means that you suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is being harmed or may be at risk, it is your responsibility to make a report as soon as practical to the Child Abuse Report Line 131478 or via E-CARL.</p> <p>All reports alleging abuse by a Carers SA staff member should also be treated as a criminal matter.</p> <p>Refer to Child and Young Person Reporting Procedure and Client Incident Management Procedure.</p>
Serious complaints/comments against Carers SA staff	<p>Where a serious complaint regarding either a child or adult is claimed against Carers SA staff this needs to be dealt with in accordance with the Counselling and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure and relevant HR policies and reporting procedures.</p>
NON urgent complaints/comments	<p>Where the complaint does not immediately affect the health, safety and welfare of the carer or another person, the investigation of complaint will commence within 24-48 hours with an aim to be resolved within five (5) working days.</p>
Serious negligence or criminal matter	<p>In the event of serious negligence or a criminal matter, or involvement of the SA Health & Community Services Complaints Commission or Ombudsman SA, Carers SA CEO will be notified immediately.</p>

Complaints / Comments Feedback handling procedure	
1.	<p>The staff member who receives the complaint or comments of concern must complete a <i>Feedback and Complaints Form</i> and attach accompanying letters/comments and details from the person making the complaint.</p> <p>If the complaint or comment is relevant to brokered services e.g. Carer Gateway Consortia Partner or Brokered Services, the staff member ticks the box for External Service Provider and adds the name of the service provider on the <i>Feedback and Complaints Form</i>.</p>
2.	<p>The staff member who received the complaint or comment of concern must enter the complaint/comment of concern onto the Triple C Register in Teams.</p> <p>A summary ONLY of the complaint or comment is entered into the triple C register.</p> <p>Ensure all relevant boxes are marked leaving the sections from AC onwards for the relevant Program Manager to complete.</p>

3.	The <i>Feedback and Complaints Form</i> and documents are forwarded to the Team Leader/ Program Manager for follow up and response. The Team Leader/ Program Manager determines who is the most appropriate person to respond to the complaint/comment of concern and whether immediate involvement of an Executive Manager and/or CEO is required
4.	The delegated person follows up within the stipulated timeframe (within 1- or 5-day timeframe, as above) and records actions on the <i>Feedback and Complaints Form</i> .
5.	The Program Manager reviews the outcome of the complaint to ensure the complainant has been appropriately responded to and updates the Triple C register to reflect the complaint has been actioned. The Program Manager identifies any improvements, trends etc from the complaint/comment of concern and completes the relevant section on the <i>Feedback and Complaints Form</i> . The continuous improvement register should then be updated to reflect the improvement identified where required. <i>The Feedback and Complaints Form</i> is now complete and must be forwarded to the relevant Executive Manager or CEO where relevant (within 1- or 5-day timeframe as above).
6.	Form sent to Executive Manager, then forwarded to CEO for sign off.
7.	Feedback and Complaints Form to be saved in teams in the CCC linked documents folder
8.	The CEO will inform the Board of any serious complaints or comments of concern made against Carers SA. CEO also prepares a yearly summary of all complaints received and actions undertaken and presents this to the Board.

Compliments, Comments and Complaints - Handling Responsibilities

Program Managers are responsible for determining the most appropriate action to be undertaken based on compliments, comments, or complaints received. This may involve the Program Manager or Team Leader:

- contacting the complainant/ contact person to obtain more information,
- discussing feedback with staff members,
- operational or service delivery changes,
- discussions with Executive Managers and Leadership team etc.

This responsibility includes regular reporting to Executive Manager on Compliments, Comments and Complaints received and using the information collected to identify quality improvements relevant to services, engagement practices, communication and other areas.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Establishing a culture that welcomes compliments, comments and complaints, takes them seriously and responds appropriately.
- Monitoring policy implementation.

The **Executive Management Team** are responsible for:

- Providing leadership of the compliments, comments and complaints policy and ensuring procedures and processes are in place and that all feedback and complaints are recorded, responded to and managed appropriately, consistent with this Policy.
- Ensuring escalation and internal review processes are in place and information on how complainants can make an external appeal
- Ensuring urgent and serious matters are identified and actioned promptly and appropriately, including reporting or referral as required to the CEO or Board and/or to external authorities and;
- Identifying opportunities and systemic issues and implementing remedial actions and improvements.

Program Managers, are responsible for:

- Monitoring the Triple C Register

Program Managers, Team Leaders and senior staff are responsible for

- Clearly communicating to their staff responsibilities and requirements, including policy and procedures, related to complaints and feedback
- Supporting staff to appropriately respond to complaints and feedback
- Monitoring implementation of effective implementation of this Policy and Procedure
- Ensuring that investigations are undertaken within specified timeframes and documented appropriately as per this Policy and Procedure.

All staff are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with this Policy, the *Feedback and Complaints Form*, and any procedures, guidelines and processes associated with this Policy.

Continuous Improvement - Survey Results

Results from surveys are to be used to identify:

- Staff training
- Service improvements
- Carer satisfaction with the service type.

Carers SA seeks to encourage an environment of continuous improvement of all aspects of service management and delivery, with carer and other stakeholder feedback being an important aspect of this – refer to Continuous Improvement Policy. Quality improvements based on feedback can be captured by staff using a Quality Improvement form.

6. Related Documents

- Feedback and Complaints form
- Quality Improvement form
- Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure
- Carers SA Code of Conduct
- Incident Management Procedure and Reporting.
- Children and Young Person Safety Policy
- Child and Young Person Safety Reporting Procedure
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Counselling and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Feedback Form - Young Carer Activities
- Carer Gateway Service Provider Operating Manual

- Carer Support Framework
- In Person Peer Support Service Design and Guidelines
- Carers SA Triple C Register
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints Charter
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Relevant HR policy where a staff member is the focus of an investigation

8. Related Legislation

- Ombudsman Act 1972
- Health & Community Services Complaints Act (2004)
- Children's and Young Person Safety Act 2017
- Privacy legislation

SHAREPOINT PAGE			
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