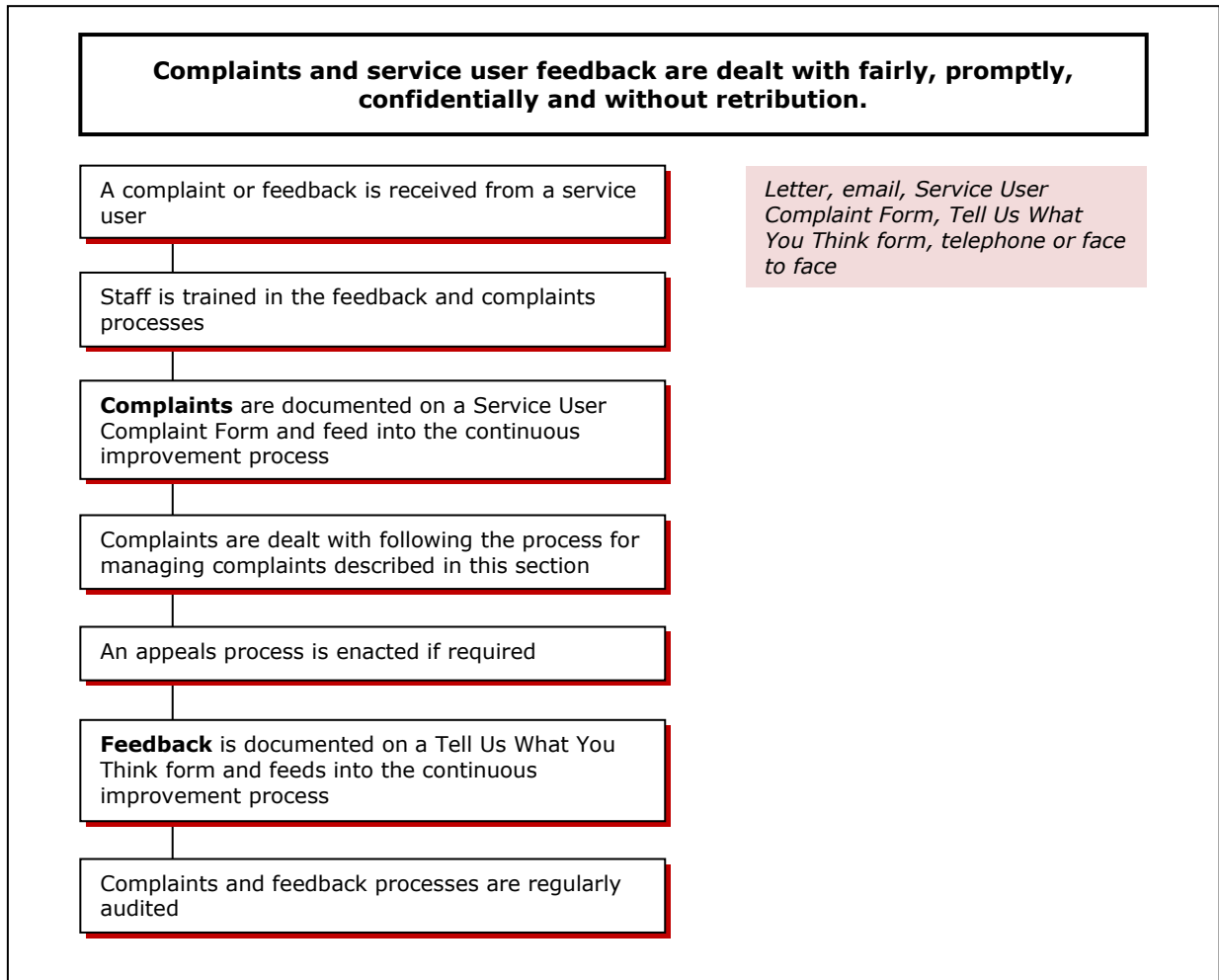


COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE USER FEEDBACK



FORMS AND RECORDS

Service User Handbook	Shared Drive
Service User Complaint Form	Coordinator
Tell Us What You Think Form	Shared Drive

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16.1 Service User Complaints

A complaint is serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of Sherwood Respite Service Inc. (herein known as SRS) service provision. Service users 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 (2013) Department of Health and Ageing to guide our management of complaints for aged care complaints.

Service users are made aware, through the [Service User 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 service users at the time of assessment and review.

Service users can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly with transparency and promptly and for staff to take steps to ensure that service users feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

All feedback 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: Corporate Governance.

16.1.1 PROCESS FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS

Step	Timeline
1. A complaint is received via a Support Worker or directly from a service user/representative via letter, email, face to face or telephone.	On day complaint is received
2. A Service User Complaint Form is created by the person receiving the complaint and the complaint is reported to the Coordinator	
3. The complaint is reviewed by the Coordinator and relevant information and proposed action is recorded	Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint
4. The Coordinator contacts (by telephone or letter) the service user to advise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the complaint is being assessed o the process that is followed o the timeline o their right to an advocate and advocacy agency support (see Section 17: Advocacy). o Who their contact person is and details on how to contact them and o When they will be contacted again. 	Within 4 working days of receipt of complaint
5. The Coordinator reviews the complaint and decides the action to be taken and who takes it	Within 7 working days of receipt of complaint
6. The Coordinator updates the Management Committee on the complaint and its progress.	Within 15 working days of receipt of complaint
7. Action is carried out including providing an apology to the complainant is appropriate. Person/s affected by the complaint are fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to provide further information and contribute to the solutions.	
8. The service user is advised of the actions taken to address the issues raised and the outcome of the complaint in a letter. The letter also advises the complaints appeal process should they be dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint (see Section 17: Advocacy).	

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Step	Timeline
9. If the service user is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint is referred directly to the Management Committee for final decision.	Within 20 working days or receipt of complaint
10. If the service user wishes to appeal the decision of the Management Committee, they are given the option to go to an advocacy agency (see Section 17: Advocacy)	
11. When the complaint is finalised a staff person is identified by the Coordinator to make sure that the service user feels comfortable to continue accessing the service and to obtain feedback on the complaints procedure. The complaint is then closed out.	Within 25 working days of receipt of complaint

16.1.2 EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

If a service user chooses to complain to an external agency they are free to do so and SRS will support them as required. Agencies that service users can lodge a complaint with include:

- State Complaints Hotline of 1800 080464 (for the Younger Disabled Clients)
- Director Aged Care Policy Directorate (HACC) and
- The Aged Care Complaints Scheme (Home Care Packages and Commonwealth funded HACC Services) on 1800 550 552
- Other contacts detailed in Section 17 Advocacy.

16.2 Service User 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 service user does not want to make a formal complaint. For example, feedback on an occasion of late service provision or dissatisfaction with a provided meal. Positive feedback is a compliment or praise regarding service delivery, staff or the organisation. Feedback can be formal or informal.

16.2.1 FORMAL FEEDBACK

Formal feedback is given with the intention of providing feedback such as a service user completing a [Tell Us What You Think](#) form or specifically informing a staff person about their dissatisfaction with day centre activities.

When feedback is not written on a Tell Us What You Think form the staff person receiving it completes a form and attaches any documentation. The procedure outlined in 5.2.1 Tell Us What You Think Form is followed.

16.2.2 INFORMAL FEEDBACK

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

Informal feedback is recorded by the staff person on a Tell Us What You Think form. The procedure outlined in 5.2.1 Tell Us What You Think Form is followed.

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16.2.3 DISPUTES BETWEEN SERVICE USERS AND SUPPORT WORKERS

SRS Support Workers are required to report immediately to the Coordinator any dispute with service users, regardless of how small. Disputes are reported verbally in the first instance. The Coordinator then decides:

- Whether the service user 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 Coordinator may offer the service user the opportunity to make a formal complaint. If the service user accepts this offer the Coordinator completes a [Service User Complaint Form](#) with them and the complaints process is followed.

16.2.4 USE OF AN ADVOCATE

Service users 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 service users may have special needs, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Coordinator 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 may be required. In the event an interpreter is required, SRS will consult / engage the support of a professional interpreter.

The Coordinator 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.

16.3 Conflict or complaint between a client and their principal carer

In the event of a conflict or complaint between a client and their principal carer, SRS will:

- encourage early identification and open discussion of potential difficulties at assessment and in care planning to alleviate major conflicts;
- recommend the use of an advocate or suitable mediator in an endeavour to resolve the situation.

In the event that a conflict or complaint between a client and their principal carer may be suspected elder abuse:

- it is SRS staff's responsibility to report this to the Coordinator, who in turn may seek legal advice.
- In the event that a client may have impaired decision making capacity (including dementia), the Coordinator may:
 - refer the matter in writing to the Office of the Adult Guardian for investigation, or
 - refer the matter in writing to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to determine whether the appointment of a formal guardian is necessary or whether current guardianship arrangements are appropriate.

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16.4 Confidentiality of Complaints and Disputes

As far as possible, knowledge that a service user has lodged a complaint (and the details of that complaint) is limited to staff directly concerned with its resolution. The service user'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 Service User Feedback Process

Feedback and complaints processes and systems are regularly audited as part of the SRS audit program and staff, service users and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback on issues and areas where improvements can be made (see [Corporate Calendar](#) and Section 5: Continuous Improvement).