

1. Introduction

Perth Home Care Services (PHCS) / Regional Home Care Services (RHCS) welcome feedback including complaints from people we support, their families, carers and/or their advocates. This feedback assists us to improve the work we do and to strengthen and build our relationship with people we support.

Our own staff can also use the complaints procedure should they wish to submit a complaint and where required will be sign posted to the relevant internal policies and procedures that relate to supporting staff.

2. Definitions

PHCS defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with our support from people, their families/carers and/or their advocates. The three definitions are as follows:

1) Simple Complaint: An issue or event that can be resolved by team members of the person we support through discussion, negotiation and actions leading to the acknowledgement of any hurt caused. Team members include Support Workers, Team Leaders, Liaison Officers, Community Services Officers, Assistant Coordinators and Coordinators.

2) Significant Complaint: An issue or event that requires referral to senior staff for investigation and may result in changes to strategies, practice or procedures.

3) Serious Complaint: May require a review of systems and work practice in consultation with the General Manager, Community Services.

A complaint is additionally classified as **serious** when an issue:

- May result in legal action; civil, criminal or disciplinary hearing
- Involves allegation of abuse; physical sexual emotional or financial abuse or neglect of a person who uses our services.
- May have resulted in the serious injury or death of the complainant due to the action of a staff member or another person who uses our services

If the complaint is considered serious, stage two, which is detailed on page 2 should be undertaken immediately.

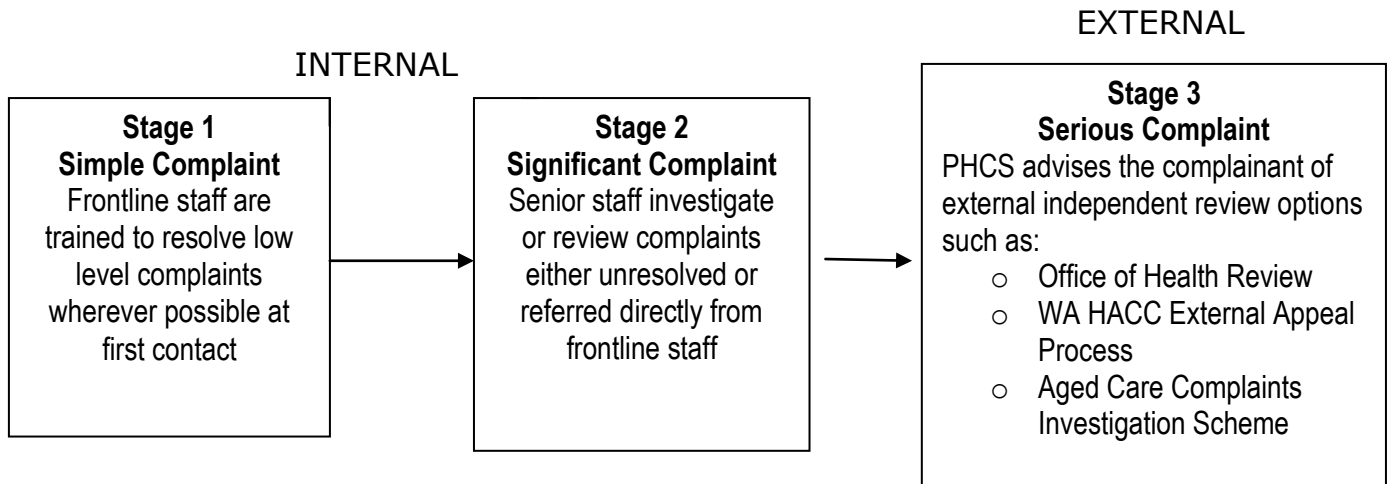
3. Principles

PHCS work to promote the following principles:

- People we support have the right to know what they can expect from us
- Complaint handling will be handled one person at a time and will be consistent with the principles and objectives in the relevant legislation and Service Standards in the Disability, Aged Care and Mental Health Sectors
- Perth Home Care Service welcomes feedback and complaints as part of continuous improvement. Given Perth Home Care Services encourages a culture of continuous improvement, we ensure staff receive initial and ongoing training and support in responding to and managing feedback and complaints

4. Stages in Complaints Management

The diagram below maps out the 3 stages of PHCS complaints management process:



5. Staff Procedures for Handling Feedback and Complaints

Whilst handling or dealing with a complaint, staff will undertake the procedures and processes detailed within the following three stages.

5.1. Stage 1: Simple Complaint - Issues that can be readily resolved

- People we support, their families and/or an advocate are encouraged to talk about any concerns or dissatisfaction they may have directly with the staff who provide their support.
- Staff will do what they can to try to resolve any concerns or dissatisfaction at this stage. In most cases staff can deal with the concerns successfully within the existing relationship, or through discussion with other key personnel. The staff member should feedback to their Line Manager and this information will be recorded in the Client Data Base by the Coordinator and CSO.
- For people we support, their families and/or an advocate who have been unable to have their concerns resolved at this stage, the staff member should immediately refer the complaint to the relevant Coordinator. If the complaint is of a serious nature it should be referred to the General Manager, Community Services or nominee

5.2. Processes for dealing with complaints – Stage 1

The processes outlined below should be followed when dealing with a complaint at stage 1 of the complaints procedure:

- 1) Individual, family, advocate or staff is dissatisfied
- 2) Issue is raised with a member of staff
- 3) Potential solution / outcome is conveyed
- 4) Issue is resolved or withdrawn
- 5) Outcomes and details are entered into the client database
- 6) If issue is only partly resolved or unresolved, the complainant is asked if a formal complaint is required
- 7) If a formal complaint is required, the staff member must complete Part A of the complaints form (appendix 1) and a copy given to the complainant within 3 working days
- 8) The complaint should proceed to stage 2 of the complaints process (refer to page 3)
- 9) The complaint should be issued a copy of the process feedback questionnaire (see appendix 2)

5.3. Further assistance for complainants requiring advocacy may be obtained from:

- Advocare, L3 Kings Complex, 517 Hay St Perth. Ph: (08) 9221 8599
- Office of the Public Advocate, L1 Hyatt Centre, 30 Terrace Rd Perth. Ph: (08) 9278 7300 or Freecall: 1800 807 437
- Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre, 320 Rokeby Road, Subiaco WA 6008, Ph: (08) 9388 7455 or Freecall: 1800 659 921

6. Stage 2: Significant Complaint – More complex issues

The following procedures will apply when dealing with a significant complaint:

- Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant by the relevant Coordinator, or for serious complaints the General Manager, Community Services or nominee should occur within 3 working days
- The person managing the complaint will document any attempts made to contact the complainant and document when contact has or not been achieved and will document discussions or any actions taken on the feedback and complaints form (see appendix 1).

The following sections should be completed on the feedback and complaints form:

* Significant Complaint Part A and B

* Serious Complaint Part A and C

- Investigate the complaint, checking the information (both written information and discussion with relevant staff)
- Plan a response to the person making the complaint. Where necessary seek senior management endorsement of the proposed response.
- Final resolution – the person responsible for finalising the complaint should communicate the solution/outcome to the person face to face (when possible) and confirm in writing within 3-working days.
- A copy of the complaint and resolution should be kept within the person's file and complaint file

In relation to the above, the timeframe to investigate and respond to a complaint will vary accordingly to its complexity. As a guide 15 working days is recommended for a response to be given for most complaints. If it takes longer than the 15 days to investigate a complaint, the person will be informed of progress at least every 10 working days.

6.1. Processes for dealing with complaints – Stage 2

The processes outlined below should be followed when dealing with complaints at stage 2 of the complaints procedure:

- 1) The complaint / issue is raised with the relevant staff member
- 2) Issue / complaint is referred to appropriate senior staff member
- 3) Manager should log the complaint in the complaints database and issue a reference number
- 4) Senior manager should acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days
- 5) Investigation of the issue / complaint should be commenced
- 6) If the issue is resolved or withdrawn, all the relevant sections of the feedback and complaints form should be completed, as stated above
- 7) If the issue is only partly resolved or unresolved and the individual, family member or advocate is dissatisfied, the issue should be referred to stage 3 of the complaints procedure
- 8) The complainant should be issued a copy of the process feedback questionnaire (see appendix 2)
- 9) Community Services Manager will audit complaints on a monthly basis to ensure, where appropriate, the complaint has been resolved and closed

7. Stage 3: Serious Complaint - Review processes

The following procedures will apply when dealing with and reviewing serious complaints:

- The General Manager, Community Services or nominee will handle and deal with serious complaints
- Staff must ensure that they refer the complaint to the General Manager, Community Services, when they recognise that the complaint has fallen into the serious category
- The General Manager may need to notify the police or relevant external bodies such as the Department for Community Development, the Office of the Public Advocate, or a professional registration board
- Some serious complaints may require other PHCS policies and procedures to be followed rather than the consumer complaint procedures
- If the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the process or outcome in stage 2, they should be offered an internal review.
- Complaint reviews are to be handled by a relevant senior manager or the General Manager, Community Services and should follow the process described in (Stage 2) until the final resolution
- Complaints that are not resolved using the PHCS procedure should be referred to an appropriate external body
- The Office of Health Review may investigate complaints about health and disability services, including complaints about non-compliance with the Carers Charter.
- The Home and Community Care External Appeal Process (WA), or Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme (national) may investigate complaints in aged care that have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant
- Final resolution – the person responsible for finalising the complaint should communicate the solution/outcome to the complainant in person (when possible) and confirm in writing within 3-working days

7.1. Processes for dealing with complaints – Stage 3

The processes outlined below should be followed when dealing with a complaint at stage 3 of the complaints procedure:

- 1) Individual, family member or advocate dissatisfied
- 2) Internal review process is undertaken
- 3) Individual, family member or advocate are satisfied with the outcome
- 4) All parts of the feedback and complaints form (appendix 1) are completed and the issue is finalised and closed
- 5) Individual, family member or advocate are kept fully up to date of the outcome
- 6) If the individual, family member or advocate is still dissatisfied an external review process will be commenced
- 7) All parts of the feedback and complaints form should be completed (see appendix 1) and the issue finalised and case closed
- 8) Individual, family member or advocate are kept fully up to date of the outcome
- 9) The complaint should be issued a copy of the process feedback questionnaire (see appendix 2)
- 10) Community Services Manager will audit complaints on a monthly basis to ensure, where appropriate, the complaint has been resolved and closed

8. GUIDELINES

PHCS feedback and complaints procedure and processes show our commitment to:

- A person centred approach that seeks to involve the person, their families/carers and/or advocates
- Fairness and objectivity
- Feedback and complaints procedures being made known to people/carers, their families and/or advocates
- People who wish to give feedback or complain have the help they need to do so
- Monitoring and analysis of information collected is used to improve support
- Staff understanding their roles and responsibilities when a person has a complaint
- Staff responding courteously and respectfully to feedback and complaints within the specified timeframe
- The commitment of management and staff to have a good way of helping people with complaints

PHCS will issue a complaints process feedback questionnaire (see appendix 2) as this assists us to:

- Collect non identifying data on people's feedback and complaints
- Use the information to identify systemic or underlying causes of people's problems
- Strive to correct any problems to improve the way people are supported
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our complaints procedure and processes and the outcomes achieved

Given that there may be barriers discouraging feedback and complaints, PHCS takes this into account by:

- Ensuring our feedback and complaints system is accessible to all people regardless of their disability
- Ensuring people/carers and their families are aware of agencies that can provide advocacy services if desired
- Having three stages for complaints handling
- Reviewing the feedback and complaints procedures regularly with people's involvement

Appendix 1**COMPLAINTS FORM – PART A**

We want to make it easy for you to give us feedback, or to lodge a complaint. Simply fill out this form and send it to Perth Home Care Services, PO Box 1597, Osborne Park DC WA 6916. If you prefer, you can contact us by telephone on 9204 7800.

Personal Details: Date:

Last Name:.....First Name:.....

Address:.....Postcode:.....

Telephone: Home.....Work.....Mobile

Email:.....Preferred way to contact you:.....

Are you the person affected by this issue? Yes No

If No, please specify the name of the person affected:.....

What is your relationship to the person?

 Family member (please specify)..... Guardian..... Other (please specify)..... Friend/Advocate.....**Details of the issue [If insufficient space to describe what happened, please add as an attachment]**

What happened?.....

.....

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Who was involved?.....

When did it happen? Date: Time:

Where did it happen?.....

Have you raised this issue with us before? Yes No

If yes, please advise who you spoke to and what you were told.

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What would you like to see happen as a result of you raising this issue?

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What to expect

Thank you for raising this issue with us. We take all issues seriously and we will contact you within 3-working days of receiving this form to advise you of what we will do and the expected time it will take to deal with the complaint.

Signature of Complainant:Date:

Feedback Received by: Name: Position.....

Signature:.....Date:.....

- Copy to Complainant
- Copy to register
- Copy to person we support file (office use only)
- Entered into Elle

COMPLAINTS FORM – PART BIssue conveyed by: Phone In person Email Letter/Fax Web

Date received:..... Received by (name & position):.....

Nature of the issue (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of service | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of service | <input type="checkbox"/> Service delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):..... | |

Location and type of service / support

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan site (please specify):..... | <input type="checkbox"/> DSC funded | <input type="checkbox"/> HACC funded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional site (please specify):..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Other(please specify):..... | |

Details – summary of issues(s) [If insufficient space for summary, please add as an attachment]

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Classification: Stage 2 (Significant) – complete Part B *Stage 2 (Serious) – stop here and refer onIs the matter a serious complaint? Yes No

If yes, advise the General Manager, Community Services or nominee immediately.

*For serious complaints give this form to the staff member to enable them to complete Part C.

Stage 2 – Actions takenMatter discussed by Phone OR In person

Please specify any advice provided:

.....Date:

Stage 2 – Solutions(s) identified (tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apology | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of policy or procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> Service improvement action | <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute product/service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Given undertaking to avoid recurrence | <input type="checkbox"/> Service terminated | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):..... | | | |

Stage 2 - Outcomes

Resolved Partly resolved (specify):.....

Withdrawn Unresolved (specify):.....

Was the complainant satisfied with the handling of the issue? Yes No Unknown

Was the complainant satisfied with the outcome? Yes No Unknown

Feedback form sent Yes No

Issue confirmed by: (Tick all that apply) phone in person email letter/fax

Finalised by:(Name):.....Signed.....Date:.....

What service/system improvement resulted from this complaint?

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.....
.....

Date file closed:..... Authorised by:.....

Date details entered into database:.....

COMPLAINTS FORM – PART C

This section should be completed for all Stage 2 and 3 matters by the appropriate staff member. In particular, document all steps in the investigation process, including dates, times, actions and evidence collected.

Classification: Stage 2 (Significant) Stage 3 (Review Process)

Investigation [Attach additional sheets as required]

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Solutions(s) identified (tick all that apply)

- Apology Change of policy or procedure Service improvement action
- Substitute product/service Given undertaking to avoid recurrence Service terminated
- Other (please specify):.....

Outcomes

- Resolved Partly resolved Referred to.....
- Withdrawn Unresolved (please specify):.....

Was the complainant satisfied with the handling of the issue? Yes No Unknown

Was the complainant satisfied with the outcome? Yes No Unknown

Feedback form sent Yes No

Finalisation of the issue

Issue confirmed by: (Tick all that apply) Phone in person email letter/fax

Finalised by:(Name):..... Signed..... Date:.....

What service/system improvement resulted from this complaint?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date file closed:..... Authorised by:.....

Date details entered into database:.....

Appendix 2

Complaints Process Feedback

How good is our Complaints Procedure?

Perth and Regional Home Care Services (PHCS/RHCS) strive to deliver the best possible service to the people they support. Your views on how well we are doing in achieving this goal are very important to us.

As you have recently submitted a complaint, we would be grateful if you would complete our complaints feedback questionnaire, as we want to know if you were happy with how we dealt with your complaint. Once completed, the questionnaire should be returned using the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

If you would prefer for a member of staff to discuss the questionnaire with you or to complete it with you over the telephone, please contact Sandra McLatchie, Manager, Systems and Knowledge on (08) 9204 7858.

We hope you will take this opportunity to share your experiences with us regarding our complaints process so we can continuously improve our support to you.

Questions:	Yes	No	N/A
When you submitted your complaint did the staff member explain the complaints process to you?			
Was the staff member handling your complaint polite and courteous?			
Did the staff member advise you of the timeline involved?			
Did we comply with the timelines involved?			
If we did not comply with the timescales, were you advised of the reason for the delay?			
Were you satisfied with the way in which your complaint was handled?			
If not, were your concerns or dissatisfaction taken further?			

COMMENTS:

How could we make the complaints process better?

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the complaints questionnaire.