

Feedback and complaints management

Policy and Procedure



1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Hartley Lifecare:
 - 1.1.1 is committed to being open, responsive and respectful to any feedback and complaints offered by our clients, client representatives, families, supporters, employees and members of the community;
 - 1.1.2 will, at all times seek an outcome to feedback and complaints which is satisfactory to all parties;
 - 1.1.3 will treat all feedback and complaints as confidential; and
 - 1.1.4 values and utilises feedback to support continuous service improvement across the organisation;

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- 2.1 establish the principles that govern Hartley Lifecare's response to feedback and complaints;
- 2.2 ensure the existence of a policy and procedure through which clients, client representatives, families, supporters, members of the community and our employees can communicate any complaints regarding Hartley Lifecare's services and operations; and
- 2.3 enable Hartley Lifecare to benefit from feedback and complaints through ensuring they are recorded, considered, resolved, monitored and utilised to support continuous quality improvement initiatives.

3. Scope

This document applies to all Hartley Lifecare clients, client representatives, families, supporters, members of the community and employees.

4. Definitions

Clients	Any person receiving services from Hartley Lifecare.
Client Representative(s)	Any person(s) and/or organisation(s) with the authority to represent a client. This may include family members, Guardians, advocates, notaries, Public Trustee.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about any Hartley Lifecare service and any aspect of the service Hartley Lifecare provides to its clients.
Complainant	Any person or organisation who is making a complaint.
Compliment	An expression of praise, congratulations and/or admiration from clients, client representatives, families, supporters, employees and members of the community
Feedback	Information provided to Hartley Lifecare from an individual or group about its service provision and general operations. This information can be in the form of opinions, comments, suggestions, compliments, complaints and/or concerns and can be communicated verbally and/or in writing through various mediums.
Supporters	Any person(s) and/or organisation(s) who provide financial or 'in kind' support to Hartley Lifecare.
Guardian	A guardian is a person appointed by the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) under the <i>Guardianship and Management of Property Act 1991</i> . A guardian is appointed to make a range of personal and health decisions for a person who is found by ACAT to have a decision-making disability.

5. Principles

- 5.1. Hartley Lifecare:
 - 5.1.1. will maintain a formal feedback and complaints procedure to ensure that all feedback and complaints are responded to in a timely and impartial fashion;
 - 5.1.2. will ensure that clients, client representatives, families, supporters, employees and members of the community are aware of this policy and relevant procedure;
 - 5.1.3. will ensure that all clients are informed of the existence of this policy and procedure at the commencement of receiving services as well as providing relevant information on the Hartley Lifecare website;
 - 5.1.4. will ensure that all compliments, suggestions for improvement and complaints are recorded, considered and retained for process and service improvement purposes. Feedback and complaints will be reported back to the Board when appropriate.
 - 5.1.5. will ensure that feedback and complaints will be managed in a confidential manner and only the people directly involved in making, investigating or resolving a complaint will have access to information about it.
 - 5.1.6. encourages clients, client representatives, families, advocates, supporters, members of the community and employees who have a feedback and/or a complaint, to express this through the formal complaints procedure.
 - 5.1.7. will ensure that the complainant is informed of his or her right to have a support person or advocate present to assist or represent them during the formal complaints procedure. Formal complaints can be written or verbal. The complainant or their support person must sign the document.
 - 5.1.8. will ensure that the complaint investigation process is impartial. No assumptions will be made nor any action taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
 - 5.1.9. will ensure that any complaint is free of repercussions for the complainant. Management will take all necessary steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs against anyone who makes a complaint.
 - 5.1.10. will ensure that, when handling complaints from clients with complex communication needs, someone is involved who has a good understanding of the clients' preferred communication method. This person should be someone the client or the client's representative chooses.
- 5.2. Clients, client representatives, families, supporters, employees and members of the community who have an informal complaint should consider trying to resolve the complaint when and where the issue occurs, directly with the person(s) and/or service provider and/or employee involved. If the complaint is resolved, no further action is required.
- 5.3. Clients, client representatives, families, supporters, employees and members of the community may at any time refer a complaint to any level of Hartley Lifecare's management staff or to an external agency. However, complainants should consider that external agencies often require that all attempts be made to resolve a complaint within the organisation in the first instance.
- 5.4. Employees of Hartley Lifecare may pursue work-related complaints through Hartley's Grievance policy and procedure and/or through directly discussing the matter with their supervisor in the first instance.

6. Procedures

- 6.1. If an informal complaint remains unresolved or an individual and/or group of people/organisation wish to make a formal complaint, the complainant and/or their representative will provide details of the complaint (in writing) directly to one of the following Hartley Lifecare staff members.
 - 6.1.1. House Supervisors
 - 6.1.2. Disability Programs Managers (DPM)
 - 6.1.3. Senior Managers
 - 6.1.4. Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- 6.2. The staff member receiving the feedback and complaint will:
 - 6.2.1. acknowledge receipt of the feedback and/or complaint in writing within two (2) working days;
 - 6.2.2. investigate the matter, including meeting with the relevant parties involved to discuss the feedback and/or complaint, including making a good faith attempt to resolve the matter promptly;
 - 6.2.3. create a file, recording the relevant information including a timeline of events, previous actions taken and the expectations of the complainant;
 - 6.2.4. ensure action to resolve the issues and/or complaint commence within three (3) working days of the feedback and/or complaint being received;
 - 6.2.5. elevate the matter to the relevant DPM, Senior Manager and/or CEO if the issues and/or complaint remain unresolved within seven (7) working days of the complaint being received.
 - 6.2.6. elevate the matter immediately to the relevant DPM, Senior Manager and/or CEO if the complaint is serious. This includes matters associated with serious misconduct, abuse and neglect.
- 6.3. If a complaint cannot be resolved with seven (7) working days of the complaint being received, the matter will be referred to a DPM and/or Senior Manager and/or the CEO, who will coordinate a meeting with the complainant and/or their representative so that a good faith attempt can be made to resolve the matter.
- 6.4. If the complaint cannot be resolved, and with the agreement of both parties, the CEO and/or the complainant may engage an external and independent mediation firm or agency to manage the complaint process.
- 6.5. If the complaint is not resolved following an independent mediation process, the complainant can refer the complaint to an institution such as the Human Rights Commission.
- 6.6. The CEO will maintain copies of relevant documents relating to feedback and complaints in a separate "Complaints file". Complaints files are confidential and remain the property of Hartley Lifecare.

7. Review

- 7.1. Hartley Lifecare may make future changes to this policy and procedure to improve the effectiveness of its operation and ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- 7.2. Feedback on this policy can be directed to the Senior Manager – Business and Operations at any time. Whilst feedback is welcome, it may not necessarily lead to a change in the policy.

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Endorsed by: Eric Thauvette, Chief Executive Officer