

COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy

Policy statement

Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provide valuable information on levels of client satisfaction and provide an organisation with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service. Feedback is to be taken seriously and to be seen as an opportunity for improvement.

Feedback that is recorded and handled effectively will provide valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, coordinating a consistent approach for resolution, reducing the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity in a way that respects and values the person's feedback, can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence about a service. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system can assist an organisation to achieve this.

Guiding principles

An effective feedback, compliment and complaint handling system addresses the principles of visibility and accessibility, responsiveness, assessment and investigation, feedback, improvement focussed and service excellence.

Our approach to complaints management supports:

- Clients understanding their rights and responsibilities
- Information on the compliment and complaint management process being easily accessible
- Increased satisfaction of clients in the management of their complaints
- The recording of data to identify emerging and existing trends or systemic issues
- Staff to demonstrate an awareness of feedback, compliment and complaint management processes
- Staff to develop the range of skills and capabilities required to manage compliments, complaints and feedback
- Complaints are acknowledged, assessed and resolved in a fair, efficient and timely manner,
- Appropriate action is taken in relation to issues raised in complaints,
- Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any person who makes a complaint, and any affected person with disability, is advised how to make a complaint to the NDIS Commission, and

- Appropriate support and assistance in contacting the NDIS Commission in relation to a complaint is provided to any person making a complaint, and any affected person with disability.

Visibility and accessibility

The complaints management process will be visible and accessible to individuals and:

- explain how and where to make a compliment or complaint, including an anonymous complaint
- consider specific needs of the individual or barriers they may experience
- explain how the organisation will manage a complaint and the expected timeframe for resolution
- support individuals to identify and seek their preferred outcome

Responsiveness

The complaints management process will be responsive and provide mechanisms and strategies to:

- promote client's rights, particularly those with special support needs, so they can actively participate in the complaints process
- inform and train staff to use the complaint management system
- ensure there is clarity about the requested outcome
- monitor timeframes for resolution
- communicate with all relevant parties about the progress of the resolution of the complaint

Assessment and investigation

The complaints management process will have mechanisms to:

- assess complaints for severity, safety, complexity, impact and the need for immediate action
- collect adequate and appropriate information
- protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information

Feedback

The complaints management process will provide mechanisms and strategies to:

- explain what happened and why, what will be done to fix the issue, and who will do it, how we will communicate our progress and how we will check things are on track
- explain the reasons for the decision
- provide regular updates to the complainant if the resolution is delayed
- notify the complainant of alternative complaint resolution pathways and review mechanisms
- follow up with complainants to determine the effectiveness of the outcome, where appropriate.

Service excellence

The compliment and complaint management system and resolution process is a part of a quality culture where complaints are an opportunity for improvement through:

- positive attitudes towards dealing with feedback, complaints and respect for the person who has raised the matters
- a clear statement that no one will be adversely affected as a result of making a complaint or a complaint being made on their behalf

Clients Knowledge of Complaint Making Process

- Clients (or their representatives) are free to make complaints in whichever format they are most comfortable with, including, but not limited to: email, phone, text, mail, in person.
- All staff are aware of the policy and will elevate any complaint to the relevant officer, regardless of if the comment was just made in passing or as a formal complaint.
- Our complaints management process is outlined in many formats and always available upon request. This includes:
 - Written paper copies
 - Online copies
 - Large font copies

Compliment and complaint management process

The compliment and complaint management process can be simplified into five steps:

1. Receive
2. Record
3. Acknowledge
4. Resolve
5. Communicate resolution



1. Receive

- Listen – openly to the concerns being raised by the complainant.

- Ask – the complainant what outcome they are seeking.
- Inform – the complainant clearly of the complaint process, the time the process takes and set realistic expectations.
- Accountable – be empathic towards the affected person and action all commitments made.
- Assess – create a prioritisation framework to identify situations, which pose an immediate threat or danger, or require a specialised response.

2. Record

- Record – all information that is relevant to the compliment or complaint, in its original and simplest form.
- Store – in a compliment or complaint management system.
- Protect – use a system allows the complainant protection from whom they are complaining about.]
- The complaints management and resolution system is fully be documented. Accessible forms of the documented system are available for and can be provided to:
 - Persons with disability receiving supports or services from the registered NDIS provider
 - The families, carers and advocates of those persons with disability
 - Each person employed or otherwise engaged by the registered NDIS provider.

3. Acknowledge

- Acknowledge – receipt of the complaint early to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the person who raised the complaint.
- Anonymity – a person may request to remain anonymous in their lodgement and therefore contact may not be possible or expected.
- Desired outcomes – provide realistic expectations and refer the matter to other organisations where identified as being more suitable to handle.
- Conflict of interest – avoid this by appointing a person unrelated to the matter as an investigator.
- Timeframes and expectations – provide these to the complainant where possible.
- Report the complaint – to the relevant legal body if the complaint makes a criminal complaint.

4. Resolve

- Involve the complainant – keep them informed of the progress of the complaint and discuss any disparities identified in the information held.
- Additional information – request when required but apply a timeframe that limits when it is to be provided.

- Extensions in time – consider only where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant with an explanation of the need.
- Record – continue to record all decisions or actions of the complaint investigation in the compliment and complaint management system.
- Focus – when investigating, focus on the identified complaint matters only. A complaint is not an opportunity to review the whole case.

5. Communicate resolution

- Outcome – Where possible, discuss the outcome verbally with the complainant before providing written advice and allow them the opportunity to make further contact following receipt of the written advice.
- Recourse – include what further action may be available to the complainant at the conclusion of the complaint investigation. An action of recourse may be to escalate the matter further with an external agency or for a further review within the organisation.
- Further reviews – providing a minimum of one further review will enable the first investigation to be reviewed for soundness and allow additional information not available in the first complaint to be included.
- Opportunities – develop a mechanism or process by which complaint outcomes can be relayed to the appropriate area within the organisation for action to improve service delivery.
- Feedback – develop a process that allows for a review of the complainant’s experience of the complaints process by encouraging and enabling feedback on how the process by which their complaint was dealt with.
- Support – is available from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training or other organisations in the form of training, advice and resources to support receiving and managing complaints. Refer to the Listing of organisations for additional support.
- All records of the complaint (including information about the complaint, action taken to remedy the complaint, and the outcome of this) are kept for 7 years.

All staff members need to be aware and involved in the complains management process

Who	Commitment	How
Head of Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<p>Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements.</p> <p>Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p>
Manager responsible for complaint handling	Establish and manage our complaint management system.	<p>Provide regular reports to the Directors on issues arising from complaint handling work.</p> <p>Ensure recommendations arising out of complaint data analysis are implemented where appropriate.</p> <p>Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy's policies and procedures.</p> <p>Encourage staff managing complaints to provide suggestions on ways to improve the organisation's complaint management system.</p> <p>Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.</p>

<p>Staff whose duties include complaint handling</p>	<p>Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices</p>	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.</p> <p>Comply with this policy and its associated procedures.</p> <p>Keep informed about best practice in complaint handling.</p> <p>Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve the organisation's complaints management system.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.</p>
<p>All staff</p>	<p>Understand and comply with Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy's complaint handling practices.</p>	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy's complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access the Advantage Healthcare and Physiotherapy's complaints process.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints resolve matters promptly.</p> <p>Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management.</p>

Complaints Registry

Incident Details					
Date of Complaint	Complainant Name	Contact Details	Do they want communication of outcome and progress	Complaint	Desired Outcome

Complaint Management			
Date	Complaint Manager	Timeframe Given	Involved services/staff

Action Taken	
Date	Action Taken

Outcome of Action	
Date	Outcomes and Contacts