

Service User Complaints

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1.0 Service User Complaints

Feedback from Service Users is important in ensuring that services continue to meet service user needs and for planning appropriate services.

The organization regularly seeks input and feedback from consumers, carers, the workforce and others and uses the input and feedback to inform continuous improvements for individual consumers and the whole organization.

Standard 1 - All aspect of care and services need to treat consumers with dignity and respect and support them to make choices. It's also important that care and services are delivered in a way that is culturally safe. Feedback and complaints systems support the consumers to let the organisation know when this does not occur.

Standard 7 - Workforce interactions with consumers need to be kind, caring and respectful of each consumer's identity, culture and diversity. In particular, the workforce needs to be capable of supporting consumers to raise feedback and complaints about any aspect of these Standards.

Standard 8 - The organisation's governing body is accountable for the delivery of safe, and quality care, services and supports. It is expected organisation wide governance systems include feedback and complaints. The systems should support a culture of open disclosure and continuous improvement

2.0 Service User Reviews

The service user will be made aware that they can lodge a complaint should they have any concerns about their assessment, care plan or review.

Purpose

- To outline a process in detail that will enable LINC CHSP to resolve complaints.
- To identify informal (simple and straightforward complaints) and formal (complex matters) levels of complaints handling.
- To identify and adopt preventative strategies for complaints handling by involving service users closely in planning and in any changes which will affect them.
- To provide information about the complaints process to service users at commencement of service and periodically.

- To provide LINC CHSP with information about complaints.
- To use the information gathered to improve services.
- To ensure service user complaints are handled confidentially, on a need to know basis, and within the set time limits.
- To ensure that rights of service users are protected especially regarding safety.

3.0 Essential References

- The CHSP Program Manual 2020-2022 (<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/commonwealth-home-support-programme-chsp-manual>)
- LINC Policy and Procedures
- The Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards)
- *Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth), User Rights Amendment (Charter of Aged Care Rights) Principles 2019*

4.0 Support documents

- Complaints form
- Complaints register
- Letter to service users

5.0 Documentation required

- Summary of data collected
- Report and Action plan

6.0 Procedure

1. Identify when a complaint has been made.

If a person raises any issue about a service or service delivery with staff or a volunteer this will be viewed as a complaint. A record of all types of comments and complaints to be kept.

2. Identify the complaint as Formal or Informal.

- **Informal** (simple straightforward complaints): staff has the ability and authority to discuss and resolve the matter directly with the service user as quickly as possible, giving a timeline and keeping the service user informed of progress.

Staff briefly records their decision and actions on the **Complaints Form**. If the complaint is not resolved staff provide information about the next level of action.

- **Formal** (for more complex matters):
 1. The complaint is recorded on the Complaints Form and discussed at a full CHSP meeting. A staff person is designated to handle the complaint.
 2. The service user is consulted about their preferred course of action and whether they wish to involve an advocate.
 3. At this point it is explained to the service user what is involved; the people involved, LINC policy, CHSP guidelines for service delivery, strict time frames, records, how we may come to an agreement and how complaints can be

conciliated. It will also be made clear that making a complaint will in no way affect the SU's future access to services nor will it adversely affect service delivery.

4. Time limits are set for a response to be given to the service user (eg 3days, 28 days). The service user is kept informed of developments.
5. A confidential complaint record is set up The record includes the date the complaint was received, a description of the complaint, record of conversation and action taken , the solution and the date of resolution.
6. Ensure that anyone who needs to know about the complaint is informed and clear about the outcome, ensuring strict confidentiality on a need to know basis.
7. If the complaint cannot be resolved the service user is referred to the **Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre General Manager (LINC GM)** . A timeline of **within 7 days** is given to the service user for a response at this stage.
8. If a complaint is not resolved the service user is given the opportunity to discuss with the **Chairperson** of the LINC Board of Management. The service user is sent a **Complaints Form** to fill out and send to the Chairperson marked "confidential". A timeline of **7 days** is given to the service user **for a response** at this stage.
9. If a complaint cannot be resolved internally to the service users satisfaction, they are referred to the ***Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission***.
10. The complaint is reviewed to see what lessons can be learnt or changes can be made to service delivery, work systems or policy and procedures.
11. A written reason for the decision will be forwarded within 28 days of the decision being made.

3. **Recording comments and complaints:**

- a) Each complaint and the issue raised is recorded in the **complaints register**.
- b) Complaints, patterns and trends are monitored to identify ways in which the service can improve. This information forms part of the annual service plan.
- c) The management committee reviews all recorded complaints with a view to ongoing service improvement.

The complaints system is **reviewed** regularly and as part of the annual service plan to assess how easy it is for service users to complain