

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY – GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS



Preamble

In order to achieve a high level of client satisfaction, Agency values underpin the strategies used when responding to feedback from clients. Centrecare is committed to continual improvement, and as such proactively encourages feedback from its clients.

This is done by:

- (i) conducting client surveys annually; and
- (ii) obtaining ongoing feedback through the Suggestion, Compliment or Complaint Form, Service User Satisfaction Questionnaire or through the Centrecare website.

Effective and consistent management of feedback helps to continually improve services, and where necessary, gives people the opportunity to strengthen and/or rebuild relationships with Centrecare. Whilst service delivery areas may be unique in nature, the process for dealing with feedback is consistent throughout the Agency.

Objective

- To continually improve services and promote excellence in service delivery.
- To encourage feedback from internal and external clients.
- To encourage respectful, sensitive, consistent, effective and efficient handling of feedback.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed at Centrecare. It is prescribed by *AS ISO 1002 – 2006 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in Quality Endorsed Organisations*.

It is applicable to feedback relating to any aspect of services delivered by the Agency. The policy does not apply to disputes referred for resolution outside the Agency or for employment-related disputes.

Definitions

- AS ISO 1002-2006:** Australian Standard of the International Standards Organisation *Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in Quality Endorsed Organisations*.
- Internal Client:** A person who is employed (a worker, in a paid or unpaid capacity) by Centrecare, to make a contribution to service delivery or deliver services directly to external clients.
- External Client:** Partner agencies/shared client service providers, any member of the public not employed by Centrecare, who requests or engages in a service provided by Centrecare.
- Feedback:** Is the voice of the client sharing observations, complaints and suggestions with Centrecare about the way we conduct our business. Feedback is a response to an observation, concern or suggestion.

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Centrecare

Representative: Any person contracted by Centrecare to represent the Agency in a professional capacity.

Policy

Client feedback provides necessary information for the continual improvement of service delivery.

Feedback identified as a complaint should be provided to the Executive Manager or in the case where the complaint relates to an Executive Manager-Community Services, to the General Manager, or General Manager/Chief Corporate Services/Chief Financial Officer, to the Director.

Feedback obtained as a compliment or suggestion for improvement will be acknowledged and discussed at management meetings. This procedure is outlined in the **Client Feedback and Complaints** flow chart.

At the point where the feedback from an external client is received and identified as a complaint, staff will follow the procedure as set out in the **Client Feedback and Complaints** flow chart.

Centrecare will accept and take action on feedback from the general public about Centrecare tenants. However, Centrecare staff will not be able to act upon feedback from tenants against neighbours who are private home owners or in private rentals.

The rights and responsibilities of parties involved in the feedback process are outlined below.

Rights of the person providing feedback:

- Confidentiality.
- Be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Be given a clear explanation of the process.
- Be informed of the progress of their feedback.
- Have an understanding that their feedback will not affect other dealings they have with the Agency.
- Opportunity to seek external advice if the outcome is not to their satisfaction.
- Provide info about external agencies to support their claim.

Responsibility of the person providing feedback:

- Treat the agency staff with respect.
- Make timely contact with the Agency when providing feedback.
- Provide their correct contact details so the Agency can respond to their feedback.
- Clearly identify the observation, complaint or suggestion.

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Responsibility of the Executive Management, General Manager and Director:

- Promote awareness of the feedback process and foster a “no blame” culture.
- Implement systems to regularly monitor and review the feedback process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved.
- Where possible, investigate the validity of any complaint and provide opportunity for all parties to state their understanding of the situation/event.
- Be neutral and objective at all times.
- Where possible, ensure that action is taken to resolve a complaint, prevent it from happening in the future and record the event.
- Manage clients’ expectations in relation to what the feedback process can and cannot deliver.
- Where the client disengages or cannot be contacted for more than 30 days, take action to address the cause of the complaint.
- Where necessary, refer any unresolved complaint to an external agent with accurate and relevant data.