

Co.As.It. Community Services Ltd. is committed to providing high-quality services in accordance with its funding obligations and legislative requirements.

Co.As.it. recognises that feedback and complaints are essential for maintaining and improving service quality. All clients, families, carers, advocates, staff, volunteers, contractors and community members are welcomed to provide feedback or make a complaint without fear of reprisal.

Co.As.It. ensures:

- Feedback and complaints are welcomed, valued, and acted upon promptly and fairly.
- Clients are informed of their rights, including access to advocacy, interpreters, and language services.
- An open disclosure framework is applied when issues arise, ensuring transparency, accountability, and learning.
- Outcomes are communicated clearly, and improvements are made to prevent recurrence.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Clients, potential clients and others who engage in Co.As.It.'s services.
- Families, carers, representatives, and advocates.
- All staff, volunteers and associated providers.
- The governing body and Management, who are accountable for oversight of complaints management.

It covers all forms of feedback and complaints, including:

- Service quality concerns.
- Allegations of misconduct, abuse, neglect, discrimination, or breach of confidentiality.
- Concerns about staff conduct or competency.
- Suggestions for service improvement.
- Compliments and positive feedback.

CO.AS.IT.'S COMMITMENT

All feedback and complaints will be managed in a fair, transparent and person-centred manner ensuring that:

- Individuals will be treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination when raising concerns.
- Complainants will be treated with dignity, fairness and without discrimination when raising concerns.
- Intimidation, disadvantage, or reprisals against complainants will not occur.
- Access to service will continue while a complaint is being resolved, except in the event of safety concerns or requirements.

- Individuals will be informed of their right to advocacy and external complaints bodies (eg. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, NDIS Commission, Queensland Human Rights Commission or other relevant bodies).
- All feedback and complaints will be handled confidentially, following Co.As.It.'s Information Management and Privacy Policy.
- Staff, volunteers and associated providers will create an environment where clients feel safe and comfortable to express concerns.
- Open disclosure is practiced to ensure honest communication and clear information about the steps taken to resolve concerns.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is positive or negative information about care and services that may not require a formal complaint (e.g., compliments, suggestions, minor issues).

Feedback may be provided formally (via forms, surveys, written correspondence) or informally (in conversation with staff).

Feedback can be submitted via:

- Phone, email, website, or in writing.
- In person.
- Anonymous channels (eg. suggestion boxes, surveys)

Feedback is actively sought through:

- Satisfaction and Feedback Surveys.
- Satisfaction evaluations at care reviews and during service delivery.

All feedback is logged in the electronic Feedback and Complaints Register and reviewed for continuous improvement.

Positive feedback is acknowledged and shared with staff and negative feedback is addressed by the relevant Coordinator/Team Leader or Management, as required.

COMPLAINTS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with care, services, staff, volunteers, associated providers or organisational processes, where a response or resolution is expected.

Individuals are informed of their right to lodge a complaint at service commencement, during reviews and whenever appropriate.

Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, electronically, or anonymously. Anonymous complaints may be made however this may limit Co.As.It.'s ability to investigate the complaint appropriately.

Complaints should be initially directed to the relevant Coordinator or Program Officer as this can often resolve the matter quicker.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. *Lodgement*

Complaints may be received through any channel (in person, phone, email, website, written form, or anonymously).

Staff will:

- Thank the complainant.
- Explain the process.
- Assist with completing a Complaints Record Form if required and ensure all complaints received are logged into the electronic feedback and complaint register.

Verbal complaints are accepted but must be read back to the complainant to confirm accuracy.

2. *Acknowledgement*

All complaints are acknowledged within **2 business days**.

Complainant is informed of the process, next steps, and expected timeframes.

3. *Investigation*

Investigations will commence within **5 business days**.

The Coordinator will normally conduct the investigation, ensuring procedural fairness and confidentiality.

If the complaint concerns the Coordinator or if the Coordinator is not available, a Team leader or Operations Manager will conduct the investigation.

Investigations may involve direct contact with the client and where appropriate, a face-to-face interview.

Complex matters may involve oversight or direct involvement from Management.

4. *Resolution*

Complaints aim to be resolved within **30 days** of receipt.

Where resolution requires more time, the complainant will be updated regularly.

Outcomes are documented, corrective actions identified and communicated as appropriate.

5. *Escalation*

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the response provided, the complaint will first be escalated to the Team Leader or Operations Manager.

If the issue remains unresolved, it will then be referred to the CEO for further review.

UNSATISFACTORY RESPONSE

If a complaint cannot be resolved internally through Co.As.It. or the client is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint may be referred to external services such as:

- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC)
- Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
- Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- Queensland Ombudsman
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Other relevant state or federal bodies (eg. ACCC, AHRC, AHPRA).

RECORD KEEPING

Records will be kept at all stages of the handling of the complaint. This will include details of the complainant, the complaint, actions taken and outcomes.

Records will be kept securely and confidentially for at least 7 years.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND TRAINING

All staff and volunteers will complete induction and refresher training on feedback and complaints management, including open disclosure and legal obligations.

Staff will encourage feedback, respond with empathy, and support clients to access advocacy and interpreters.

Breaches of confidentiality or mishandling of complaints will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Feedback and complaints data is reviewed regularly to identify patterns, risks, and opportunities for improvement.

Improvements identified will be tracked in the electronic Continuous Improvement Register.

Meeting agendas include a standing item on continuous improvement, including review of feedback and complaints.