

POLICY NUMBER: NDIS SER DEL 6

INTENT

The intent of this policy is to ensure that people using the Service and or their Representative/Nominees have the right to raise and have resolved any complaint or dispute in relation to the services they receive. Such complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly, confidentially, and with no adverse repercussions for the individual initiating a review in accordance with this policy.

DEFINITION

Complaint: the act of complaining, a grievance which is a cause of dissatisfaction.

Dispute: controversy, debate, quarrel, disagreement.

Appeal: a request made to a court of law or to a person in authority or a relevant body to change a previous decision.

OTHER DEFINITIONS

Complain: express dissatisfaction, state a grievance concerning a particular issue.

Grievance: real or perceived cause for complaint.

Aggrieved: having a grievance.

Management: the General Manager and/or Management Committee.

POLICY STATEMENTS

- Real Living Options Association Inc. encourages the raising of complaints by Participants and/or their Representative/Nominee regarding any areas of dissatisfaction with the service they have received.

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- Real Living Options Association Inc. supports the management of complaints in a way that Participants and/or their Representative/Nominee will have no fear of retributive action when raising complaints.
- Real Living Options Association Inc will provide a system for raising complaints in a way that is accessible and transparent for all stakeholders.
- Participants will be provided with the opportunity to have access to an independent person of their choice to assist them through a complaint process.
- The resolution of complaints will be completed in a timely manner and in accordance with current policies and procedures.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. has a process for including issues raised during complaints for improvements within the Service and, if indicated, included on the Continuous Improvement Register.
- All complaints and their resolutions will be recorded in the Complaints Register and complaints/resolutions will be reported to the Management Committee through the General Manager's Report.

PROCEDURES

- Staff will make every effort to establish an atmosphere of trust and open communication so that complaints are dealt with in a constructive way and as soon as possible after the complaint is received.
- The General Manager will create an environment in which the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee feel free to raise their concerns about service delivery and are assisted in pursuing a resolution of issues and complaints.
- At the signing of their first Service Agreement, the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee, will be provided with a written copy of the complaints procedure which will be explained.
- Should a complaint be made, the General Manager will explain to the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee all the steps which will be taken to resolve the issue and obtain their consent before any action is taken.
- The General Manager will provide a Complaint Form for completion and signature by the complainant.
- The General Manager will maintain a Complaints Register containing a record of each complaint received and include the complaints/resolutions in the Report to the Management Committee.

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Problems Which May Constitute a Complaint or Grievance Could Include

- Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or harassment, invasion of privacy, discrimination, deprivation of choice, lack of respect for an individual's dignity, repeated tardiness, patronising language, unsafe driving practices, unwelcome imposition of will, offensive language, smoking, etc. or any practice objected to by the person using the Service.

Complaints Involving an Incident

- If the matter raised involves an incident, an Incident Form will also be completed and action taken regarding the incident.
- If a complaint involves an unlawful act, the matter may be referred to the appropriate agency.

Resolving a Complaint

- All complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible and as informally as possible and must maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all persons concerned.
- Participants may have a Representative/Nominee to provide support during any part of the complaint process. If they do not have a Representative/Nominee within their network, the Service will provide details of Advocacy Agencies within the area.

All complaints whether formal or informal must be:

- Undertaken in a fair and positive manner with confidentiality maintained throughout the process.
- Approached in a positive way, with the aim of resolving the complaint in an appropriate manner.
- Referred to the Management Committee either for their action or for their information.

Complaints about a Lifestyle Assistant

- The matter should be discussed with the Support Manager who is responsible for organising the support arrangements of the Participant.
- The Support Manager will listen to the complaint and investigate the circumstances and events leading up to the complaint, and the details of the complaint is to be included in their report to the General Manager.
- The Support Manager will attempt to resolve the matter as informally as possible by discussion with the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee with a view to finding a resolution and a way forward to finalise the matter.

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- If the Support Manager is the only person who has been involved to this point, the matter will be referred to the General Manager for further discussion to attempt to find a resolution.
- If the General Manager is unable to resolve the issue the matter will be referred to the Management Committee.
- The complaint/resolution must be entered into the appropriate Registers.

Complaints about Office Support Team Members

- If the complaint is against an Office Support Team member and cannot be resolved by discussion with the person, the complainant may make a complaint to the General Manager who will attempt to resolve the matter. If it cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the matter will be referred to the Management Committee as soon as practicable for further action.

Complaints about the General Manager

- If the complaint is against the General Manager and cannot be resolved by discussion with the General Manager, the complainant may make a complaint to the Management Committee who may refer the matter to the Grievance Committee.

Referral to the Grievance Committee

- If the Management Committee decides the complaint is to be addressed formally through the Grievance Committee, the Grievance Committee will investigate and meet with the person/s concerned.
- Following referral to the Grievance Committee, if the complaint is not resolved, the Management Committee will be informed, and the complainant will be advised of their right to contact the relevant external authority.
- A final statement of outcome and resolutions of each grievance process must be signed off by all parties, and entered into the Complaints Register and, if indicated, the Continuous Improvement Register. This will signify the completion of the current grievance process.

Role of the Grievance Committee (see Roles & Responsibilities of the Grievance Committee)

The Grievance Committee will:

- Follow all Grievance Committee Guidelines to resolve the complaint/grievance.

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- Make any recommendations to the Management Committee if service improvements are indicated for inclusion in the Continuous Improvement register.
- The Grievance Committee must ensure as far as practicable that the manner in which all meetings are conducted will be conducive to maintaining relationships and respect and will provide fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation whilst maintaining privacy and confidentiality.
- Prior to the first meeting, provide advice to the complainant that they may have an independent person/s to support them at meetings. This person will be advised whether they be active or observing, dependent on the individual's situation.

Grievance Meeting Process

The Grievance Committee will:

- Establish the role of the support person or of each person if there is more than one.
- Outline the process that is to be followed.
- Inform the parties that any information obtained in the conduct of the meeting is confidential.
- Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations including dates, people involved and attach any supporting documentation.
- Provide the complainant with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken.
- At the conclusion of the Grievance process the resulting agreed outcome and planned actions will be recorded, signed and copies supplied to all parties.
- This will be reported to the Management Committee, and a timetable agreed upon for a review of the resulting actions.

Feedback about the Complaints Process

- Persons involved in a complaints process will be provided with a Feedback Form to document their level of satisfaction with the complaints processes.
- Persons involved in a complaints process will have access to a later review of any resulting corrective action/s taken.

Appeals Process

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to request that the Service review the process.
- The complainant will also be provided information about their right to contact the relevant external authority.

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- The complainant or their representative may choose to make a complaint to:

National Disability Insurance Agency

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints>

or talk to the **NDIS Commission** on 1800 03 55 44 (This is a free call from landlines)

or online <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/>

DELEGATIONS

Management Committee

- Receive complaints which have not been able to be resolved by staff.
- Appoint a Grievance Committee and oversee its responsibilities.
- Approve the Role and Responsibility/Guidelines of the Grievance Committee.
- Set procedures for the Grievance Committee.

General Manager

- Identify and address potential problems before they become formal grievances.
- Be aware of, and committed to, the principles of open communication and information sharing with the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee.
- Ensure as far as practicable all complaints are handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity and all concerned are treated fairly and without fear of retribution.
- Provide information to complainants about the referral to the Grievance Committee where a complaint is not able to be resolved satisfactorily.

Support Manager

- Be the first point of contact for complaints relating to service delivery.
- Identify and address potential problems before they become formal grievances.
- Be aware of, and committed to, the principles of open communication and information sharing with the Participant and/or their Representative/Nominee.
- Ensure as far as practicable all complaints are handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity and all concerned are treated fairly and without fear of retribution.

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- Provide information to complainants about the referral to the General Manager where a complaint is not able to be resolved satisfactorily.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Easy Read Complaints and Feedback.

Role and Responsibilities of the Grievance Committee.

Grievance Committee Guidelines.

Complaint Action Minutes.

Complaints Register.

Continuous Improvement Register.

Feedback Register.

Feedback & Complaints Form.

REFERENCES

Qld Disability Services Act 2006.

National Disability Insurance Act 2013.

NDIS Terms of Business.

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators.

AMENDMENTS/REVIEWS

Amended 07/06/2012.

Amended 19/01/2017.

Amended 22/02/2018.

Amended 25/06/2020.

Amended 02/03/2023.

Amended 21/05/2026.

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