Complaints Management Policy and Procedure

POLICY

The Complaints Management policy has been implemented to manage and resolve complaints about the supports and services provided by DATSS staff and provide information about the quality of health and attendant care services Dignity and Transition Support Services (DATSS) staff delivers. Management of a complaint provides the opportunity for stakeholders to have their issues resolved effectively and for DATSS to identify and implement improvements to service delivery.

PURPOSE

The DATSS Complaints Management Policy and Procedure has been developed to ensure the systematic recording of stakeholder complaints and their resolution.

Enabling any person to make a complaint (including an anonymous complaint) to DATSS or the NDIS Commission about the supports or services provided and providing for an easy and accessible process for making and resolving complaints and ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any person who wishes to make, or has made, a complaint.

This policy describes how DATSS reports, investigates and records all complaints raised by stakeholders, and provides timeframes for when the outcomes of each of these steps will be reported. Adherence to the policy will ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to the reports, investigation and recording of complaints with appropriate actions taken and shared across the organisation.

Complaints are acknowledged, assessed and resolved in a fair, efficient and timely manner; and appropriate action is taken in relation to issues raised in complaints.

Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any person who makes a complaint to DATSS, and each person with disability affected by an issue raised in such a complaint, is advised how that complaint or issue may be raised with the Commissioner of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (Commissioner) and appropriate support and assistance in contacting the Commissioner in relation to a complaint is provided to any person who makes a complaint and each person with a disability affected by an issue raised in a complaint.

SCOPE

DATSS Complaints management policy and associated procedure/s are applicable to all DATSS stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out how any person can provide feedback and make complaints about any aspect of DATSS operations and the process that DATSS will take to address or respond to feedback and complaints.

Legislation, regulations and standards relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- Disability Act 2006 (QLD)
- Disability Amendment Act 2012 and 2013 (QLD)
- Human Services Standards (QLD) – Empowerment
- 4.5. Complaints Management (Departmental Policies, Procedures and Initiatives, Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services)
- AS ISO 10002-2014 Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (QLD)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)
- NDIA Terms of Business
- Australian Consumer Law

This policy and procedure applies to all stakeholders of the organisation, including participants, families and carers, advocates, staff, volunteers, contractors, other service providers, government agencies and members of the community.

Issues raised by DATSS staff (where applicable), volunteers and contractors would generally be dealt with under DATSS Disputes and Grievances Policy and Procedure, however from time to time staff may raise issues or provide feedback that is best dealt with under this policy.

Compliments, complaints and other forms of feedback provide DATSS with valuable information about client satisfaction and an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of its service. Feedback is taken seriously by DATSS and seen as an opportunity for improvement. DATSS records and handles feedback effectively in order to identify areas for improvement, coordinate a consistent approach to complaint resolution, reduce 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 DATSS services. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, transparent, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system will assist DATSS to achieve this. DATSS has an effective feedback, compliment and complaint handling system that addresses the principles of visibility and accessibility, responsiveness, assessment and investigation, feedback, continuous improvement and service excellence.

DATSS approach to feedback and complaints management ensures: ▪ people understand their rights and responsibilities; ▪ information on the feedback, compliment and complaint management process is easily accessible; ▪ people's confidentiality is maintained throughout the process; ▪ increased satisfaction of participants in the management of their feedback, compliments and complaints; ▪ the recording of data to identify existing or emerging trends or systemic issues; ▪ staff demonstrate an awareness of DATSS feedback, compliments and complaints management processes; ▪ staff develop and demonstrate the range of skills and capabilities required to manage compliments, complaints and feedback; and ▪ an organisational culture that is focused on effective, person-centred complaints resolution and utilising feedback and compliments for continuous improvement.

PROCEDURE

If comfortable, the person making the complaint could acknowledge and attempt to resolve the complaint by consulting with the stakeholders involved in the complaint and referring to any other relevant information.

Complaints can also be made anonymously to DATSS or to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The complainant will be advised of the Complaints Management Policy and Procedure in the first instance and assistance given if required to complete Sections A and B of the Complaints Form.
DATSS Management will report back to the complainant within 24 hours of the complaint being received advising of the outcome of the investigation. If resolved, the Operations Manager will forward the Complaints Form to the Community Services Manager.

If the complaint is not resolved, the Operations Manager will advise the complainant of the next stage, and escalate the complaint to the Community Services Manager.
The Operations manager will provide information on independent advocates referring to the Advocates List, and forward the Complaint Form to the Community Services Manager.
The Community Services Manager will investigate the complaint and report back to the complainant and/or their independent advocate within 48 hours of the complaint being escalated advising of the outcome of the investigation. If resolved, the community services manager will complete Section C of the Complaints Form and forward on to the Managing Director.

If the complaint is not resolved, the Community Services Manager will escalate the complaint to the Managing Director. The Community Services Manager will complete Section C of the Complaints Form and forward the Complaint Form to the Managing Director.
The Managing Director will investigate the complaint and report back to the complainant and/or their independent advocate within 48 hours of the complaint being escalated advising of the outcome of the investigation. If resolved, the Managing Director will complete Section D of the Complaints Form

If the complaint is not resolved, the Managing Director will provide further options to engage an independent advocate. The Managing Director will also advise on how to transfer to another service provider. The Managing Director will complete Section D of the Complaints Form.
The Managing Director will review all complaints and document feedback of the outcomes of all complaints in Section D of the Complaints Form. The Managing Director will collate all complaints in the complaints register and present the register at the monthly service users meeting.
The meeting will forward all complaints to the Senior Management Group monthly.

In order for a complaints management and resolution system to operate effectively, all DATSS staff play a crucial role in implementing the system.

In accordance with laws, complaints will be referred to other bodies as required.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Managing Directors and the Senior management Group. The Managing Directors and Senior Management Group will review documented complaints monthly to ensure the effective management of complaints. The Managing Directors and

Senior Management Group will revise this policy and procedure in order to reflect changes made in these monthly reviews.

This policy will be integrated into DATSS's Quality Management System, and will be accessible to all stakeholders.

All stakeholders will be made aware of DATSS's Complaints Management Policy and Procedure and copies will be made readily available. We will make all service users aware of this policy as part of our induction program and provide all service users with a copy of this document.

All complaint records are kept for 7 years from the day the record is made.

References

- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- Code of Conduct
- *Judicial Review Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*
- *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 – Guideline for complaint management in organisations