



Feedback & Complaints

AGED CARE POLICY

Policy Version 3.0

Category: Administrative *(Required by Legislation)*

Adopted: October 2023



Feedback & Complaints Aged Care Policy

Purpose

Winton Shire Council (Council) regularly seeks input and feedback from clients, carers, the workforce and others and uses the input and feedback to inform continuous improvements for individual consumers and the whole organisation.

Winton Shire Council recognises feedback, including complaints, provides a valuable opportunity to improve community care services. All forms of feedback are welcome and is actively sought through a range of engagement opportunities. Winton Shire Council's Community Care Services complaints management approach follows the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling:

- Culture: Our organisation takes a positive approach to complaints, recognising they are valuable for continuous improvement in everything we do.
- Principles: The complaint handling system is modelled on principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency and is integrated into all organisational practices.
- People: All staff at orientation learn how to respond positively to complaints. Key staff are trained, skilled and supported in complaint management to ensure issues are resolved appropriately.
- Process: Our complaints management process follows the seven stages of complaint handling: prompt acknowledgment, assessment, planning, investigation, response, review, consideration of systemic issues.
- Analysis: Management use information from complaints to identify any trends. They share trends with the governing body and staff, the consumer and/or representative and any continuous improvement processes put in place.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All Community Care Services team members,
- Their volunteers,
- Students on placement,
- Contractors and consultants, whether or not they are employees,
- All other brokered service providers and
- Winton Shire Council Councillors.

Policy statement

Our organisation commits to:

- Establishing a system to manage feedback and complaints and use this system to improve how we deliver care and services.
- Encourage and support consumers, visitors, staff and contractors/suppliers to ask questions, share feedback, raise concerns or make complaints.

- Provide a range of opportunities and means both formal and informal for sharing feedback about the service and ideas for improvement including options that allow the person to remain anonymous if they choose to.
- Ensuring information about how to make a complaint or provide feedback is easily accessible with respect for cultural, language or physical needs including accessing language and other support services and has up-to-date contact details.
- Provide information about and support access to alternative and external advocacy and complaint resolution services.
- Provide staff with information and training on:
 - how to encourage feedback
 - how to provide feedback on service quality and improvement opportunities
 - what to do when feedback or complaints are received
 - ways to support consumers provide feedback or make complaints including access to advocacy, language and hearing services and how to identify when these may be required and
 - determining when feedback should be managed as a complaint.
- Establishing effective complaints management practices consistent with the nature and scale of the business operations that:
 - are based on the principles of transparency, procedural fairness and natural justice and meets best practice guidelines
 - proactively, respectfully and cooperatively manages complaints
 - adopt a positive, blame free approach that focuses on the process not a person thereby avoiding any negative repercussions for the person providing the feedback
 - ensure appropriate investigation into the cause is undertaken
 - apply the principles of open disclosure when things go wrong and
 - ensure accurate and current records are maintained including the:
 - name of the person making the complaint (unless choosing to remain anonymous)
 - dates the complaint was received, acknowledged and responded to
 - substance of the complaint and
 - details of the response actions including the person responsible, due date and status.
- Provide sub-contracted service or brokerage providers with clear expectations and processes for managing feedback and complaints about the services.
- Partner with the person making a complaint throughout the management process including inviting them to participate, keeping them informed, involving them in identifying the solution or follow-up actions and/or encouraging them to share ideas about improvement opportunities.
- Abide by any agreement, timeframes and commit to any undertaking to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.
- Facilitate any external or independent review of the complaint, including working cooperatively with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission when appropriate.



- Keep a central record of all complaints and feedback in a register that indicates the type of complaint to help identify trends.
- Undertake periodic analysis of feedback and complaint data to identify trends and systemic opportunities for improvement.
- Report complaints and feedback data and trends to the governing body of the organisation when required.
- Utilise consumer feedback in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of care and support services.
- Include opportunities for improvement that arise out of complaints and feedback in the organisation's Plan for Continuous Improvement.
- Regularly review the feedback and complaints management processes.

Operational need

To deliver on the consumer outcome of consumers feeling safe and encouraged and supported to give feedback and make complaint. To be engage in processes to address my feedback and complaints and confident appropriate action is taken.

Roles and responsibilities

Winton Shire Council

Winton Shire Council is responsible for ensuring systems and processes for responding to feedback and complaints are maintained.

Management

Management is responsible for ensuring:

- fostering an environment where feedback and complaints are encouraged, reported, investigated and outcomes incorporated into continual improvement activities.
- ensuring matters contained in this policy are endorsed and clearly communicated to all relevant personnel within the organisation.
- ensuring applicable staff have the required skills to effectively manage complaints.
- implementing a process for reporting feedback and complaint matters to the management team and governing body.
- monitoring feedback and complaint data as well as the effectiveness of this policy as part of continuous improvement activities and
- ensuring industry standards for complaints management are met.

All staff including volunteers and contractors

All staff, contractors, students and volunteers are responsible for understanding and following this policy and completing education and training as directed.

Communication

This document will be published on the Winton Shire Council website and will be made available to all employees involved in the delivery of Aged Care services provided by Winton Shire Council.



Related Council documentation

Aged care records including:

- Results of consumer feedback,
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback register,
- Continuous Improvement Plan.

Legislation, Recognised Authorities and Other Sources

- Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling in Aged Care Service (Department of Health).
- Better Practice Guide (Commonwealth Ombudsman)
- Good Governance Principals and Guidance (Australian Institute of Company Director).
- Aged Care Open Disclosure Framework and Guidance. (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care)
- Aged Care Act 1997
- Charter of Aged Care Rights (Australian Government Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission)
- Regulation:
 - Standard 6 (3)(a) Feedback and complaints are encouraged and supported.
 - Standard 6 (3)(b) Access to advocates, language services and other methods.
 - Standard 6 (3)(c) Response to complaints and open disclosure process
 - Standard 6 (3)(d) Feedback and complaints are reviewed and used to improve the quality of care and services.
 - Standard 8 (3)(c) Organisation wide governance systems
- ACCPA Policy HC-Feedback and Complaints

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when legislation or standards change and remains in force until amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

Record of amendments and adoptions

Date	Revision No	Reason for amendment	Date adopted by Council
December 2021	Version 1.0	Initial policy	16 December 2021
October 2023	Version 2.0	Updated quality standards	13 October 2023

