

PROCEDURE Complaints, Compliments and Ideas

1. PURPOSE

This procedure outlines how Senses Australia manages feedback, including complaints, compliments and ideas for improvement, from clients, their families, carers or other representatives, and any other Senses Australia stakeholder.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers, students and contractors of Senses Australia, all clients, their families, carers or other client representatives, visitors, supporters, sponsors, contractors and any other Senses Australia stakeholder.

Complaints made by carers in relation to Senses Australia services that have impacted on them and their role as carer must be dealt with under the provisions of this procedure.

This procedure does not cover grievances by employees about the employee relationship with Senses Australia. For such matters, refer to the Grievances which Relate to the Employment Relationship Procedure.

3. DEFINITIONS

Complaint

Any expression of dissatisfaction made to Senses Australia, related to its products, services or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Supervisor

The position to whom the employee reports directly (i.e. regional area supervisor, coordinator, manager, executive director, director or CEO).

Clients

For the purposes of this procedure, the term clients also includes clients' families, carers or other representatives such as advocates or legal guardians.

Employees

For the purposes of this procedure, the term employees also includes volunteers, students and contractors.

4. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

All employees of Senses Australia must use all relevant opportunities to welcome and encourage feedback, and manage any feedback received in accordance with this procedure.

4.1 Opportunities to provide/receive feedback

A person wishing to provide feedback directly to Senses Australia may do so in writing or in person using the following avenues:

- Via the Senses Australia website – www.senses.org.au
- Via e-mail – feedback@senses.org.au
- Via post to Senses Australia's Head Office PO Box 143, Burswood, WA, 6100
- In person to any Senses Australia employee or volunteer, either face to face or by telephone

Clients may also lodge a complaint about their service directly to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) which is an independent statutory authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health or disability services provided in Western Australia.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) asks that clients funded through them provide feedback by contacting their local NDIA office, emailing feedback@ndis.gov.au, calling 1800 800 110, or completing an online complaint form.

4.2 Promoting and encouraging feedback

On commencement of their service, and during the annual individual plan review, all clients must be given the "Tell Us What You Think" leaflet which details all methods for providing feedback and how feedback is handled by Senses Australia.

During staff orientation, induction and ongoing supervision, it is essential that all supervisors make employees aware that they are required to encourage and promote regular feedback opportunities from clients and other stakeholders.

Regular communications via social media and the In Touch Newsletter must promote Senses Australia's policy to welcome and act upon feedback received, and provide information on how feedback can be provided.

Information regarding the feedback process must be provided in an accessible format and be readily available in common areas such as entry foyers and notice boards.

4.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Persons providing feedback to Senses Australia may do so anonymously. All complaints are dealt with confidentiality on a need to know basis within Senses Australia.

4.4 How to deal with feedback received

Receiving verbal feedback

Employees must demonstrate a positive manner and be receptive to all compliments, complaints and ideas made to them.

All employees must:

- Listen carefully and make notes during the conversation (where possible) or immediately following the end of the conversation, and
 - Confirm the details by repeating back the information and gain agreement from the person providing the feedback.
 - If required, explain what action will be taken and how long this will take (if known).
 - If there is an issue that needs to be resolved, agree on a solution and if possible resolve the issue at this stage adhering to Senses Australia's policies and procedures, and taking into account duty of care obligations.
- If the employee has access to IRIS, record these directly into IRIS
 - if related to a client, use pathway: *Contact / Feedback – From / Add New Feedback*
 - if not related to a client or anonymous, use pathway: *Feedback – Add New Feedback* (and leave 'client' field empty)
- If the employee does not have access to IRIS record onto the Compliments Complaints and Ideas Form.

Support workers must:

- Find the first opportunity to discuss the feedback received with their supervisor. If the complaint is recorded on a Compliments Complaints and Ideas Form, the supervisor must then enter the feedback details and upload the completed form into IRIS.
 - if related to a client, use pathway: *Contact / Feedback – From / Add New Feedback*
 - if not related to a client or anonymous, use pathway: *Feedback – Add New Feedback* (and leave 'client' field empty)

Employees other than support workers that do not have access to IRIS, must record feedback onto the Compliments, Complaints and Ideas Form and forward to the manager of the area to which the feedback pertains and discuss if necessary.

The manager of the area to which the feedback pertains must:

- Review the feedback provided and discuss with the person who received it if necessary.

- Follow up on the feedback and if there is a matter to resolve, follow this up until it is resolved and all parties are satisfied.
- For complaints which pertain to clients, enter details of the complaint into the HADSCO uploading template when the complaint is finalised.

Receiving written feedback

Feedback received in **writing** must be:

- Forwarded directly to the manager of the area to which the feedback pertains in a timely fashion even if the comments are not initially directed to that person.
- Follow through with any agreed actions and solutions immediately if required.
- Entered into the feedback section on IRIS by the manager by close of business on the day it was received.
 - if related to a client, use pathway: *Contact / Feedback – From / Add New Feedback*
 - if not related to a client or anonymous, use pathway: *Feedback – Add New Feedback* (and leave 'client' field empty)

For complaints, the manager must:

- Review the complaint and discuss with the relevant executive director, director and/or others involved as appropriate.
- Determine any action that is required. Where it is felt that the complaint or concern has legal, media or political implications, the Chief Executive Officer must be alerted immediately.

Then **EITHER**

- Within five working days of the complaint being received, respond in writing to the person who made the complaint, explaining what action will be taken and how long this will take.
- Update the details in IRIS if required and attach any written response in IRIS.

OR

- Make personal contact by telephone with the person, explaining what action will be taken and how long this will take.
- Update the details in IRIS as described above if required and make a record of what was discussed during the telephone conversation.

AND

- For complaints which pertain to clients, enter details of the complaint into the HADSCO uploading template when the complaint is finalised.

4.5 Severity of the complaint or concern

Sometimes the nature of feedback is so serious that it must be reported to a manager immediately. For example, it may relate to alleged abuse and/or neglect of clients, misappropriation of money, drug use or other matters which have the potential to hurt clients or employees if immediate action is not taken. The employee

to whom these sorts of complaints are made must use their judgement as to whether they should immediately telephone their manager to deal with the situation.

The Client Incident Response, Reporting and Investigation Procedure must also be followed if the nature of the feedback falls within the definition of a client incident.

Sometimes complaints or concerns have legal, media or political implications. If this is the case the Chief Executive Officer must be alerted immediately.

Where the complaint comes from, or has been made to, the office of the Minister for Disability or the Disability Services Commission, the Chief Executive Officer must be advised.

4.6 Complaints about specific employees

Complaints about specific employees must be dealt with in the same manner as all other complaints and the Discipline and Termination Procedure followed should this be appropriate.

4.7 Where the matter is resolved immediately

Where complaints are resolved immediately this must be recorded in the appropriate section of the feedback in IRIS.

4.8 Where a matter is not resolved immediately

Where the matter is not resolved immediately, the manager must:

- Identify all the issues.
- Have all the facts at their disposal.
- Determine the action that is required adhering to Senses Australia's policies and procedures and taking into account duty of care obligations.
- Write an action plan to address the issue.
- Determine whether the severity of the complaint necessitates the executive director, director or Chief Executive Officer being advised.
- Advise the complainant of progress within 7 days.

4.9 Following up ideas, compliments, suggestions, comments and complaints

At times the feedback may involve input and support from others at Senses Australia. The manager receiving the feedback may involve

The Health and Safety Officer

- For advice, suggestions and solutions (this can include the feedback being tabled for discussion at the next Occupational Safety and Health Committee meeting). Outcomes for the discussion are provided to the referring manager, executive director or director to follow up.

Another manager

- When the feedback is redirected to the more appropriate manager, that person will follow this procedure as though they had received it initially.

Where a matter remains unresolved for one month

- Where a matter remains unresolved for one month the manager must advise the relevant executive director or director of the matter and the progress towards resolution.

Referral to the Chief Executive Officer

- At any stage in the process towards resolution of a complaint or concern, the person may contact the Chief Executive Officer with their complaint or concern. The Chief Executive Officer will decide whether to personally deal with the matter or refer it back to the manager, executive director or director.

Referral to the Board

- The Chief Executive Officer may decide, at any time, to refer the matter to the President of the Board.

Referral to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

- The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office is the body to which any client of Senses Australia may refer a complaint. The Chief Executive Officer may decide, at any time, to refer the matter to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office. People are always advised to first try to resolve their complaint directly with Senses Australia. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily the complaint can be referred to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office for mediation.

4.10 Service improvement

Managers must ensure that any service improvement outcomes as a result of feedback are implemented and incorporated into relevant procedures if required.

4.11 Reporting and analysis

Reporting to HaDSCO

All complaints which relate to clients that were received during the financial year, including complaints made anonymously, must be entered by the manager who dealt with the complaint into the HADSCO uploading template when the complaint is finalised.

Following the 30 June of every year, the Executive Director Operations must advise all managers who are responsible for managing client-related complaints of the

dead-line for data entry into the HaDSCO uploading template. All complaints received during the financial year must be entered by this date, even when the complaint is still being resolved. Once the relevant managers have added the complaints received into the uploading template, the uploading template must be uploaded into the HaDSCO portal prior to 31 July by the Executive Director Operations.

The Executive Director Operations must check that all client-related complaints received by Senses Australia are entered into the uploading template and review the data for accuracy prior to uploading the data.

All feedback, whether relating to a client or not, must be recorded in IRIS and analysed and reported from there by the relevant executive director or director.

Executive directors, directors and managers must review feedback pertaining to their areas regularly and undertake trend analysis.

Each executive director and director must report to the Executive on all feedback received in relation to their divisions for discussion at the monthly Executive meeting and must report complaints information to the Board on a bi-monthly basis.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that they remain informed regarding Senses Australia procedures which impact upon their duties, and to work within them.

6. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

All Senses Australia employees are encouraged to provide feedback on this procedure to their supervisor, to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to reflect the actual manner in which activities are undertaken.

RELATED FORMS
FORM Compliments, Complaints and Ideas

RELATED QMS DOCUMENTS
POLICY Compliments, Compliments and Ideas
POLICY Consumer Participation
POLICY Privacy and Confidentiality
POLICY Safeguarding for Clients
PROCEDURE Client Incident Response, Reporting and Investigation
PROCEDURE Client Services Governance

RELATED QMS DOCUMENTS

PROCEDURE Code of Conduct

PROCEDURE Discipline and Termination
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PROCEDURE Duty of Care
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PROCEDURE Responding to Abuse and Neglect of a Client

PROCEDURE Standard of Service Provision

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Disability Services Act 1993

Disability Services Regulations 2004

Carers Recognition Act 2004

Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995
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