Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

Quality of care and life is a feeling of safety, well-being, independence and maintaining connection with community. Trained and skilled staff understand, listen, notice changes, and ensure dignity through choice and respect.

Purpose

Our commitment to you:

Huon Regional Care seeks open feedback from consumers, families, friends, staff, contractors or any other individual.

We seek to comprehensively understand your concerns and to use the issue(s) that you raise with us as learning opportunities for us to improve our care and services.

We encourage you to feel safe and supported when you provide feedback, raise concerns or make complaints.

We will provide information about how to provide feedback or complaints, on our website, within the facilities we manage and through the services we provide to you, your families and your friends.

At Huon Regional Care we will ensure that:

- There is no detriment, victimisation or reprisal for any person providing feedback or complaints
- The information you provide to us is safe and managed in a confidential manner, and only disclosed if required by law or otherwise appropriate in the circumstances
- We will review the information you provide and investigate your concerns keeping you informed of the process,
- All complaints are received in good faith and are treated fairly,
- We will afford procedural fairness to both the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 business days of it being received by us,
- We endeavour to resolve complaints within 15 business days of receiving the complaint, or we will contact you to agree on a longer timeframe if required,
- We will take appropriate action to address the issues you have raised with us and seek, wherever possible, to resolve these concerns to your satisfaction,
- We will review the feedback and complaints submitted to us and commit to being responsive to your concerns in the interests of improving the quality of care and services we provide

- We will provide monthly communication that lets you know we welcome your feedback, including complaints, compliments and suggestions for improvement
- You are not charged any fees for making or withdrawing complaints or feedback or for the management or withdrawal of complaints or feedback

Authorisation

This policy is approved by the Board and issued under the authority of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO may authorise amendments to this policy at any time.

Scope

This policy addresses the complaints and feedback management system at Huon Regional Care to:

- encourage the submission of complaints and feedback,
- receive, manage and resolve complaints and feedback,
- provide support to the complainant and affected individuals and,
- review the information we receive to improve care, service, systems and processes.

Definitions

Procedural Fairness	Procedural fairness requires that a person be given a fair hearing before a decision adversely affecting the person's rights and interests is made. More specifically, it requires that a decision-maker give the person: • reasonable notice that an adverse decision may be made • notice of the of the key issues and be given enough information to participate meaningfully in the process • information about any adverse, relevant or credible evidence that has been obtained from other persons • a fair opportunity to directly respond and address key issues, impartiality Procedural fairness requires the decision-maker to genuinely consider the person's submissions with an open mind and without prejudgement or any form of bias.
Restorative Practices	A restorative approach focuses on building, maintaining and restoring positive relationships after a concern is raised. It validates the person's experience; avoids defensive responses; acknowledges the emotional impact of issues, not just the procedural facts and involves the person in identifying what resolution looks like for them. It seeks opportunities to learn, rebuild confidence, and improve relationships.

Vexatious Complaint	A vexatious complaint is a complaint that is made with the intention of harassing or annoying the recipient, rather than to address a genuine issue or concern. Such complaints are often frivolous or baseless and lack any evidence to support the claims being made. A complaint which is deemed to be genuinely vexatious will not be progressed.

Policy statement

Your views are important to us.

At Huon Regional Care we welcome you to submit your feedback or complaints so we can continue to learn and improve the care and services we provide to you and your family.

We provide an accessible and transparent feedback and complaints process that is open to consumers, relatives and friends.

We commit to responding to complaints in a fair, confidential, respectful and cooperative manner.

Feedback and Complaints can be made to us in the following ways:

Franklin	Dover	Nubeena	Support at Home
3278 Huon Highway, Franklin, 7113	15 Chapman Avenue, Dover, 7117	1614 Nubeena Road, Nubeena, 7184	1614 Nubeena Road, Nubeena, 7184 or 3278 Huon Highway, Franklin, 7113
• by phoning us on (03) 6264 7100, • using the suggestion boxes located in the North and South lounge areas and at reception. • completing a complaint/feedback form available at reception or on the pamphlets displayed in the facility to a member of staff, who will communicate with the Coordinator on	• by phoning us on (03) 6298 9200 • using our suggestion boxes located in the south lounge and the foyer entrance. • completing a complaint/feedback form available at the foyer entrance to a member of staff, who will communicate with the Coordinator on Duty or Facility Manager	• by phoning us on (03) 6250 9000 • using our suggestion box located at reception and the dining room. • completing a complaint/feedback form available at reception, • to a member of staff, who will communicate with the Coordinator on Duty or Facility Manager	• by phoning us on (03) 6264 7100 • via email @homecareadmin@huonregionalcare.org.au • to a case manager or staff member providing services in the home who will communicate with the Home Care manager •

Duty or Facility Manager			

Anonymous Complaints

Huon Regional Care accepts anonymous complaints and will investigate these complaints as much as is possible, following the process set out in this policy.

If appropriate, information on the complaint outcome will be shared with our consumer population.

Whistleblower complaints

Any complaints which constitute a breach of the Aged Care Act 2024 including the associated Rules and strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards must be dealt with as a disclosure under the organisation's Whistleblower Policy unless the individual expressly elects either verbally or in writing to have it dealt with as a complaint. Individuals will be provided information by staff at Huon Regional Care to help them understand the difference between a complaint and a disclosure and offered a choice in how to proceed. All whistleblower disclosures must be afforded the protections offered under the Whistleblower Policy.

Your right to withdraw feedback

Under the Rules of the Aged Care Act 2025, you have the right to withdraw any feedback or complaints either orally or in writing.

Valuing Diversity

We recognised and value diversity and will utilise appropriate tools to provide appropriate support throughout our feedback and complaints process.

Where individuals may have diverse backgrounds including from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, or from Australia's indigenous peoples (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people), we would appreciate you informing us.

We will endeavour to work with you to safeguard the consideration of your cultural aspects when reviewing a complaint or dispute, and to ensure individuals/families feel comfortable in discussing concerns.

You may wish to have the presence of a family member, a friend or, with your permission and for your understanding of the process, the support of an interpreter.

To ensure safe practices related to culture and diversity we may require the involvement of organisations with expertise in diverse groups to provide advice or assist with actions.

Interpreter Services

Should **interpreter services** be required for the clear communication of complaints, these services will be arranged as a priority. Please ask us to arrange one for you.

- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – 131 450
- Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) – 1800 334 944

Hearing and Speech Services

National Relay Service at https://www.accesshub.gov.au/

- TTY users: 1800 555 677
- NRS Chat: NRS Chat Link and click 000 button

Also, see the section later in this policy detailing ***Further Information and Support Services***

Feedback and Complaint Progress Timeframes

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 business days of receipt.

Huon Regional Care will strive to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible, aiming to complfete the process within 15 business days.

Some complaints can be resolved in a short time frame through listening and responding, open communication and apology.

However, we also recognise that some complaints may be more complex, and more time may be needed to listen, investigate, seek further information and undertake fact finding.

Some complaints may also require the assistance and support of external organisations. This depends upon the nature of the complaint made. Should further time be required to resolve your complaint, we will discuss this with you.

Your complaint information

All complaints received by Huon Regional Care are recorded within the Complaints Register so that we can ensure there is clear documentation about

- the nature of complaints we receive,
- the investigation undertaken,
- the resulting outcomes,
- improvements we make or have made,
- and the verification of your satisfaction with the outcome (or additional process).

The patterns or trends in complaints are reviewed by the Huon Regional Care Quality and Safety Committee. The committee membership includes Huon Regional Board members, Executive and facility management staff.

Deidentified Feedback and Complaint reports are provided to the Quality and Safety Committee for consideration and input; the reports include, trends, outcomes implemented, service improvements and the resulting quality projects. The oversight of the committee assists us to ensure issues are being adequately addressed by us at Huon Regional Care.

The feedback and complaints reports are reviewed by the Quality and Safety Committee so that we have independent input into the feedback and complaint management process, and our efforts to address concerns raised and the trends we are seeing in our feedback.

Learnings resulting from the management of a complaint, or from trends in complaints, are built into the quality improvement framework as projects for identified systems or process change actions.

Information on improvements to services, systems or processes are communicated through consumer meetings, visually within service settings and promoted on our website.

Complaints Processes

Your complaint is received and managed applying the following process:

1. We will acknowledge that we have received your complaint within 3 business days.
2. We assess your complaint to gain an understanding of the issues that have been raised for you/your family member, with a focus on early resolution and restorative practices.
3. If your complaint constitutes a breach of the Aged Care Act 2024 (inclusive of the Rules and Standards), we will ask whether you would like to proceed with the complaint as a whistleblower complaint or as a complaint under this policy. We will help you understand what this means and provide you a copy of the Whistleblower Policy.
4. We plan our approach to the investigation and identify further information that may be required to support the proposed investigation.
5. We will reach out to you by phone, email or meet with you to discuss your complaint, ensure we have what you see as the most important information, and to understand your preferred outcome(s), we will also offer you our initial apology.
6. Your complaint is investigated, and we address the outcome and/or resolution measures, involving you other or relevant parties as required.
7. Our formal response to you will address what occurred, the proposed resolution and an apology, and will be practiced using the open disclosure process (ACQSC Open Disclosure).
8. Changes required from the outcome(s) of the investigation will be planned/implemented, you will be contacted to ascertain your satisfaction with the complaint outcome.
9. Following confirmation from you, we will close the complaint.
10. We will reflect on the complaints we receive and ongoing learnings to inform care and service provision.
11. At any time during the process, you are welcome to contact us. The acknowledgement you will have received will contain the name and contact phone number of the staff member managing your complaint. If we have questions or require clarification at any time, we will reach out to you.
12. Unless you have provided your feedback anonymously, you may provide your initial feedback to the Complaints Commissioner; you and any other person involved in the resolution of any issue raised by the initial feedback are also able to provide it to the Complaints Commissioner.

Unresolved Complaints

Should the proposed resolution to your complaint not align with your preferred outcome, or be unsatisfactory, we commit to continuing to make all efforts to reach an acceptable resolution.

- If required, we can escalate your concerns through our internal formal panel for review
    - The panel may include the Chief Executive Officer and/or Executive Manager, Clinical Services and/or the Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee (or delegate, who is also a Board member).

- Your complaint will be further reviewed, and additional or alternative outcomes may be proposed.
- A meeting will be held with you and the relevant Executive to discuss the review and any proposed amendments to the resolution. Depending on the outcome proposed, the Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee (or delegate) may attend. Your satisfaction will be documented, and a further written response is provided to you.

- Should you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you may choose to externally escalate your complaint to, or seek advice from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
    - 1800 951 822 for general complaints
    - 1800 844 044 for food, nutrition and dining related complaints
    - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, GPO Box 9819, Hobart, 7000

Further Information and Support Services

- Ombudsman Tasmania
    - 1800 001 170
    - ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au
- Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
    - 1800 700 600
    - www.opan.com.au/
- Disability services – NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
    - 1800 035 544
    - ndiscommission.gov.au
- Counselling and mediation - Department of Social Services
    - 1300 653 227
    - complaints@dss.gov.au
    - GPO Box 9820, Canberra, ACT, 2601
- Community Legal Centre
    - 1300 888 529
    - clctas.org.au
- Seniors Rights Centre
    - 1800 424 079
    - seniorsrightsservice.org.au

Feedback and Complaints Register

The Huon Regional Care feedback and complaints register includes the following information:

- Details of each complaint, including the complainants name and contact details (consumer name, or relation to consumer, role in the organisation, contractor name).
- Date the complaint was received.
- Details of the complaint including the areas of concern to be addressed.

- The date of acknowledgment of the complaint and mode of contact.
- The identity and title of the staff member responsible for managing the complaint process.
- Details of actions taken in response to the complaint and the date the action was taken.
- Details related to the complaint resolution, withdrawal, referral or escalation.
- Date and confirmed outcomes of the complaint management process and final response provided to the complainant.
- Date satisfaction of outcome confirmation is received from complainant.
- Reference of outcomes to identified areas of improvement and included within the Quality Improvement Plan.
- All complaint documentation is retained in IONMY under the corresponding complaint number.

Training and Review

- We will review our feedback and complaints management system, policy and processes annually.
- We will provide complaints training as part of induction processes; when there is a change in roles and responsibilities; when there are changes made to systems; policy and processes; and annually to staff.

Roles and responsibilities

Board	The Board is responsible for ensuring the continual alignment of policy and practices with current complaint requirements of Australian and Tasmanian governments.
CEO	The CEO is responsible for ensuring operational compliance with policies approved by the Board and ensuring processes, procedures and practices achieve conformance. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at this level, it is referred to the Board.
Managers / Supervisors	Managers and supervisors are responsible to abide by this policy and relevant processes, including conducting investigations into complaints, and ensuring that staff are aware of their obligations under this policy. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at this level, it is referred to the CEO.
Employees	Employees are responsible to undertake their role in alignment with organisational policies and procedures.
Quality and Compliance Lead	Responsible for triaging HRC feedback and complaints within RiskTeq and forwarding any complaints which fall within the parameter of a Whistleblower disclosure to Stopline.
Stopline	Stopline is the contracted organisation responsible for receiving and recording all Whistleblower disclosures from

	employees, contractors, suppliers and other stakeholders. Stopline will evaluate disclosures and redirect any which do not qualify. All disclosures will be forwarded to the Whistleblower Contact Officer.
Whistleblower Contact Officer	The Whistleblower Contact Officer is responsible for investigating and managing Whistleblower Complaints in Stopline's document management system. If a disclosure concerns the Exective Manager People and Culture, Stopline will direct the disclosure to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If the disclosure concerns the CEO, Stopline will direct the disclosure to the Chair of the Board.

Breach of policy

All employees are expected to conform with this policy. In proven instances where employees or management do not abide by the policy, disciplinary action may result.

Associated Documents and Processes

- Home Care Feedback Form
- Huon Regional Care Complaints Procedure (flowchart) –
- Information Management
- Open Disclosure policy
- Privacy Policy
- Privacy consent (disclosure statement)
- Residential Feedback Brochure
- SIRS resources
- Whistleblower Information Sheet
- Whistleblower Policy

Legislation, standards and processes

- Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth), User Rights Amendment (Charter of Aged Care Rights) Principles 2019
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018
- Accountability Principles 2014
- Information Principles 2014
- Quality of Care Principles 2014 (including the Accreditation Standards)
- Records Principles 2014
- Sanctions Principles 2014
- Aged Care Open Disclosure Framework and Guidance 2022
- Privacy Act 1988
- Personal Information Protection Act 2004

Alignment to standards

This policy supports the following standards:

- ACQS – Standards 1-7
- NSQHS – Standard 1, 2, 5 & 6

Resources (click on hyperlink for information)

AGED CARE ACT 2024 (NO. 104, 2024) - SECT 361 Dealing with complaints

Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling in Aged Care Services

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, Open Disclosure Framework

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Fact Sheet: Resolving concerns about aged care

The National Aged Care Advocacy Program

National Elder Abuse Prevention and Advocacy Framework

Quality references

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