

Bethany Care Ltd

Complaint & Dispute

Policy & Procedure 9

“Bethany has a proactive approach to complaints and disputes management that safeguards clients / supports from retributive action when raising complaints.”

Document Review Details	
Date Created	03/06/2005
Date Reviewed	18/02/2018
Reviewed by	Brian Lynch (Quality Assurance)
Date of next review	February 2019
Amendment History	DCR122A – Updated to A to include options for external complaint.

1. Object & Field of Application

1.1 This document details the process adopted by Bethany Care Ltd (BCL) to ensure a timely, effective resolution of complaints and disputes.

2. References

2.1 JAS-ANZ Complaints and Disputes Issue No 5 dated 24 June 2003

2.2 DSQ – Policy and Procedures for Complaints regarding Funded Services

3. Definitions

3.1 **Complaint:** A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the services provided by BCL (this includes the actions of an employee or person otherwise engaged by BCL) where the complainant requires a formal way of having a complaint heard and resolved”.

4. General (Please refer to Appendix 1 for further information)

4.1 The Bethany Care complaints procedure will endeavour to be clear, transparent and available to all relevant stakeholders.

4.2 Clients and their representatives have the right to make complaints or raise concerns if they are unhappy with any service provided by BCL.

4.3 We view all complaints positively and regard them as valuable opportunities for continuous improvement.

4.4 Any concerns will be listened to and managed with respect for people’s rights, privacy and confidentiality. As a rule, staff should not discuss sensitive complaint details with others unless there is a valid reason for doing so, e.g. behaviour management strategies. Information should only be imparted on a strict “need to know” basis.

4.5 BCL is dedicated to giving clients, and their representatives, support when raising concerns or issues. Clients and their representatives should have no fear of retributive action when highlighting complaints.

4.6 **There are severe penalties for such misconduct, which may include disciplinary or other appropriate actions (e.g. official warnings, dismissal).**

4.7 BCL acknowledges and encourages the use of client advocates and representatives in the complaints process. We encourage clients to involve family members, advocates or representatives of their choice for assistance and support. BCL is happy to assist in contacting representatives for the client. If required, BCL will liaise directly with a chosen representative to reach resolution and satisfaction. If more formal advocacy support is sought, a specialised agency may be able to assist e.g. Queensland Aged and Disability advocacy (www.qada.org.au)

4.8 BCL will always encourage and assist people to raise their concerns directly with the service in the first instance, before taking the matter up with the Disability Services Queensland.

4.9 Bethany will always encourage and assist people to raise their concerns directly with the service in the first instance. However, a client wishes to pursue external avenues for complaint, below are options which may be of assistance.

External Avenues for Complaints

<p>1) Department of Communities phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)* TTY: 133 677 email: disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au</p>	<p>2) Queensland Aged & Disability Advocacy email: info@qada.org.au phone: 1800 818 338 (freecall) or (07) 3637 6000 web: http://www.qada.org.au/</p>
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4.10 Complaints can be categorised into two different camps - formal or Informal.

1. **Formal (Please see appendix 1)** – A complaint is deemed formal when the complainant requires a specific action or outcome from Bethany Care. This may be an official investigation into an allegation, an explanation, an apology, or another action. Formal complaints tend to be of a more serious nature. In these cases complaints will be logged, and investigated as per the official Bethany Care Complaints and Disputes policy and procedure. Investigation, resolution and feedback will be documented in the quoted timescales.

2. **Informal (Please see Appendix2)** – A complaint may be deemed informal where the complainant does not require further action or outcomes. In general these cases may be of a less serious nature. That said, all informal complaints must be investigated and logged. They may arise from “throwaway comments” made by parents, clients, or their representatives, that reflect dissatisfaction with service provision.

5. How to Lodge a Complaint

- 5.1 In general, any person (known or anonymous) may make a complaint to BCL. This includes clients, family members, friends, advocates or other representatives. Members of the public, including neighbours may also make complaints. Concerns may also be raised by employees or person otherwise engaged by BCL.
- 5.2 Where a person claims to be making a complaint on behalf of a client or about the service provided to a client, that client’s (or advocate’s) permission must be obtained to proceed with the complaint (where the client is unable to provide permission the complaint must be dealt with) unless there are broader public interest considerations
- 5.3 BCL is committed to assessing complaints and resolving them as quickly as possible. From the time a complaint is received, we will endeavour to contact the complainant within the next 24 hours, or next business day should the complaint be made on the weekend. Some complicated issues may take a while to resolve.
- 5.4 A complaint can be made by phone, written submission, email, or verbally during conversation with BCL staff.

6. Review & continuous Improvement

- 6.1 Complaints shall be included as ongoing agenda items in all monthly Staff Communication and BCL board meetings.
- 6.2 In order to encourage valuable client feedback on a more consistent basis, BCL will distribute feedback forms at the end of each Bethany term. Once returned, the comments and information recorded on these forms will help drive future organisational and developmental strategies.

7. Complaint Staff Responsibilities

7.1. Personal Carers (PC)

- Report all formal and informal cases to the administration office
- Encourage the clients and their representatives to use the complaints system where appropriate.
- Reassure clients and their families that their complaints will be listened to fairly and with respect to all persons involved.

7.2. Administration Officer (AO)

- Acknowledging formal complaints within the agreed timescale.
- Notify the Assistant Manager of incoming complaints.
- Updating the Complaints Register at the start of the case.

7.3. The Quality Assessor (QA)

- Liase with the Assistant Manager and Service Manager on police and procedural issues relevant to the case
- Strive to ensure cases are resolved and investigated within stipulated timeframes
- Update the continuous improvement register and ensure staff are aware of resulting changes in working practices.
- Update the Complaints Register at the end of case

7.4. The Assistant Manager (AM)

- Is identified as having special responsibility to investigate and evaluate all incoming complaints.
- Refer cases to the Service Manager where appropriate.
- Feedback to clients and families in formal complaints and face to face consultations

7.5. The Service Manager (SM)

- Decide upon specific outcomes if the case merits it
- Brief and consult the board if when appropriate
- Liaise with other bodies and organisations (e.g. the Police, medical experts, advocacy agencies) when appropriate
- Participate in feedback to clients and families and face to face consultations where necessary

Formal Complaint & Dispute Procedure – Appendix 1

<p>TIMESCALE Part A of RIF form completed within 3 days and passed on to the AM.</p>	<p>1) Complaint Received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By e-mail, telephone, fax, post or in person. Note: If distance or / and cost is a factor it should be mentioned that statements or allegations can be made by telephone at Bethany Care's expense RIF Part A to be completed with necessary details
	<p>2) Complaint register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed with relevant details.
<p>TIMESCALE acknowledgement to be made within 24 hours or next working day should the complaint be made on the weekend.</p>	<p>3) Acknowledgement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of complaint made by e-mail, telephone, fax, post or in person. Note: If distance or / and cost is a factor it should be mentioned that statements or allegations can be made by telephone at Bethany Care's expense
	<p>4) Info sheet Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints infosheet - posted or downloaded www.bethanycare.org
<p>TIMESCALE As a general guide evaluation should take no more than 2 weeks from the time the complaint has been acknowledged. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, this anticipated timeframe might increase e.g. criminal allegations may take longer to evaluate, as police reports may need to be obtained. Although the evaluation process must never be rushed, it must be done as a matter of urgency. This will prevent the case "dragging on".</p>	<p>5) Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B of the RIF form is used by the AM to evaluate the complaint. The complaint is assessed for legitimacy, in accordance with current policies and procedures, If appropriate staff members will be interviewed and statements taken. Response drafted and formulated by AM
	<p>6) Escalation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All formal cases to be passed to the Service Manager, for further consideration / action
<p>TIMESCALE It should take no more than 3 working days to advise the relevant parties of evaluated outcomes.</p>	<p>7) Resolution / Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the matter has been evaluated and escalated the resulting outcomes will be communicated to the relevant parties by the AM If after consultation the complainant is satisfied with Bethany's response, the matter will be deemed closed. Bethany will formulate a summary of the complaint. A copy will be sent to appropriate parties if case resolved.
<p>TIMESCALE It should take no more than 2 weeks to advise the relevant parties of evaluated outcomes.</p>	<p>8) Dissatisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If after consultation the complainant is unhappy with BCL's response, it may either seek to revise its position on the matter or suggest an additional feedback consultation with its Board of Directors. As a last resort BCL should advise the customer to contact their relevant DSQ local service staff. They may be able to liaise with us in order to indirectly resolve your complaint. To contact the Complaints and Prevention Unit within Disability Services Queensland, email complain@disability.qld.gov.au, write to GPO Box 806, Brisbane Qld 4001, or phone (07) 3224 7179.
<p>TIMESCALE It should take no more than 24 hours update the continuous improvement and complaints register</p>	<p>9) Continuous Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The manager, AM and QA will highlight any continuous improvement issues BCL should implement as a direct result of this process. CQI register to be updated
	<p>10) Complaint register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed with relevant details.

Informal Complaint & Dispute Procedure – Appendix 2

<p>TIMESCALE Due to the informal nature of these complaints no timescale applies.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 259 1007 483"> 1) Complaint Received </td> <td data-bbox="1011 259 1544 483"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By e-mail, telephone, fax, post or in person. Informal complaints may come from indirect comments to staff members. Complaint register completed with relevant details. </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 490 1007 548"> 2) Complaint register </td> <td data-bbox="1011 490 1544 548"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed with relevant details. </td> </tr> </table>	1) Complaint Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By e-mail, telephone, fax, post or in person. Informal complaints may come from indirect comments to staff members. Complaint register completed with relevant details. 	2) Complaint register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed with relevant details.
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