



## **12. COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES**

### **12.1 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE**

#### **12.1.4 Complaints Policy**

##### **Background & Issues**

All Home and Community Care (HACC) service providers are required to establish mechanisms where consumer complaints are handled in a prompt, fair and confidential manner without adverse repercussions for the consumer and his/her family or carers.

##### **Objectives**

- Clients and or their carers are provided with information regarding the complaints process and how this process is accessed;
- Complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution;
- The service provider evaluates and modifies service provision, as appropriate, in response to complaints;
- The service provider assists in the management of disputes between clients and their primary carer/s related to service delivery.

##### **Area of Application**

Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care welcomes information and feedback from clients as it provides validation of the quality of services being delivered.

##### **Policy Measures**

All clients will be made aware of their right to complain and provided with information in order to understand the complaints procedure and the use and availability of advocates.

Clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly.

The Manager will take steps to ensure that clients feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

Information on the complaints procedure of Manjimup Home and Community Care is to be included in the Information Booklet, presented to and explained to the clients at the time of assessment.

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The client has the right to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf with the staff and/or management of Manjimup Home and Community Care. This may be a family member or friend, or an agency such as Advocare or Disability Service Commission.

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. All complaints are to be recorded on the Complaints Record Form which is to be completed by the Manager, and relevant documentation to be filed in the "Complaints" file.
2. Other feedback (such as suggestions by clients, carers and staff) are logged using a 'Tell Us What You Think' form and followed up by the Manager or Coordinator.
3. Person/s affected by the complaint should be fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to put their case.
4. Clients are encouraged to raise their complaint with the staff member concerned in the first instance. Staff must report this to the Manager or Coordinator.
5. The Manager will respond to all complaints within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, usually by telephone.
6. If the client is not satisfied with the outcome, or not happy to discuss the issue with the staff member concerned, they should contact the Manager or Coordinator, or use an advocate to negotiate on their behalf.
7. If the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved, the client should raise the issue with the Shire of Manjimup Director of Community Services. The contact details are available from the Manager or Coordinator.
8. Clients are advised that they can contact Advocare, the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme, People with Disabilities or, finally, the HACC Project Officer at any point in the complaints process. In particular, they are advised that they should contact one of these agencies if they feel their complaint was not satisfactorily resolved after following the complaints procedure.
9. A letter is sent by the Manager to all complainants outlining what actions have been and will be taken to address the complaint, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.
10. The client is informed of the outcome of their complaint and asked for their feedback on the complaints procedure.
11. Where clients may have special needs, such as people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the manager will ensure that any cultural aspects are considered when reviewing a complaint or dispute and will ensure the person

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feels comfortable in discussing a dispute. The presence of a family member or friend or the services of an interpreter may be required.

12. The Manager will also ensure that any actions, interventions or referrals are appropriate to people from special needs groups. This may require the involvement of organisations with expertise in special needs groups either in providing advice or assisting in actions.

#### **DISPUTES BETWEEN CLIENTS AND HACC SUPPORT STAFF**

Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care support workers are required to report immediately to the Manager or Coordinator any dispute with clients, regardless of how small. Disputes are reported verbally in the first instance. The Manager or Coordinator will then decide:

- Whether the client should be contacted
- If a written report is required
- The format of the report
- Any other action to resolve the dispute as early as possible.

The Manager/ Coordinator may offer the client the opportunity to make a formal complaint. If the client accepts this offer the Manager/ Coordinator will complete a Complaints Record Form with them. The actions specified in the complaints procedure are then followed.

#### **DISPUTE BETWEEN CLIENT AND PRIMARY CARER**

If staff members become aware of a dispute between a client and their primary carer, which concerns a Manjimup Home and Community Care service, they will refer the situation back to the Manager who will either:

- Mediate and attempt to negotiate a solution, or
- With the client's permission, bring someone in with mediation skills to mediate.

If a dispute arises which does not involve Manjimup Home and Community Care, staff should not get involved but should if requested, refer the matter to the Manager. The Manager will then refer the client and their carer for mediation.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF COMPLAINTS**

As far as possible, the fact that a client has lodged a complaint and the details of that complaint will be kept confidential amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The client's permission should be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties, which it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

#### **Administration**

HACC Manager/ Coordinator

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**Adoption and Date Due for Revision**

**ADOPTED 12 JUNE 2003  
REVIEWED 4 MARCH 2010**

**NEXT DUE FOR REVIEW MARCH 2014**

**The Administration of this Policy is by Community Services.**