



Home Care Heroes

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Redfern 2016

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Complaints Policy

Feedback and Complaints

Home Care Heroes provides the information and support to make a complaint. Each complaint can be made at any time in writing to hello@homecareheroes.com.au, through our Contact Us page, by phone (02 8310 7531) or in person.

HCH supports participation in the complaint handling process of any person wanting to make a complaint and we will work with the person to identify the desired goal.

Turn around

HCH will respond to all feedback and complaints within 72 hours. Complaints are acknowledged in a timely manner, addressed promptly and according to order of urgency, the complainant will be kept informed throughout the process.

Each person has the opportunity to;

- Choose a support person such as an advocate to assist or represent him or her during the process
 - Work with their families and carers to try and resolve the issue with HCH
 - Make a complaint in a safe environment
 - Make a complaint with no negative consequences or retribution
- Continuous and easy access to meaningful and culturally relevant information about the service provider's complaint policy and processes.
- Have a chosen support person such as an advocate to assist or represent them during the process.
- Make a complaint is supported by the service provider, in a way which reflects their individual, cultural and linguistic needs to assist them to understand and participate in the complaint handling process.
- Determines how, when and where the complaint will be made.
- Nominate the person they want at the service as the key contact regarding the complaint.

Complaints Handling Process

Recognise

1. HCH will respond to all feedback and complaints within 72 hours. Complaints are acknowledged in a timely manner, addressed promptly and according to order of urgency, the complainant will be kept informed throughout the process. Each person has the right to determine how, when and where they can make a complaint.
2. Once received complaints must be acknowledged within 72 hours by our customer service team and recorded appropriately. At this point, the customer must be provided with a reference number, contact name and relevant contact details.

Acknowledge

1. Thank the customer for their feedback
2. Tell the customer the steps you will take to assist them
3. Explain expected timeframe for resolving their complaint
4. Provide the customer with a reference number for their complaint
5. Provide relevant contact details so they can follow up the progress of their complaint if they wish

Resolve

Quick Resolve

1. Record complaint details and provide customer with reference number and contact details.
2. Resolve to close complaint.

Standard Resolve

3. Record complaint details and provide customer with reference number and contact details.

Benefits of good complaint handling

Complaints are an important way for our management to be accountable to the public, as well as providing valuable prompts to review organisational performance and the conduct of people that work within and for it. A complaint is an “expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, Heroes or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required”

Our complaint handling system provides three key benefits:

- It resolves issues raised by a person who is dissatisfied in a timely and cost-effective way;
- It provides information that can lead to improvements in service delivery; and
- Where complaints are handled properly, our system can improve our reputation and strengthen public confidence in administrative processes.

Responding to Complaints

Complaints are handled objectively and fairly with appropriate confidentiality, remedies are provided where complaints are upheld and there is a system for review for finalised complaints.

The public wants	Home Care Hero needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a user-friendly complaint handling system<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to be heard and understood• to be respected• an explanation• an apology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a user friendly system for accepting feedback• clear delegations & procedures for Heroes to deal with complaints and provide remedies<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a recording system to capture complaint data• to use complaint data to identify problems and trends<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to improve service delivery in identified areas

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| • action as soon as possible | |
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Complaints are acknowledged in a timely manner, addressed promptly and according to order of urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.

- Guidance is provided to Heroes on how to respond to and prioritise complaints. They are aware of internal complaint handling processes including how to assess complaints, which may be resolved quickly, and those which require investigation.
- Complaints are acknowledged promptly. Complainants and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint, should be kept informed of progress and the outcome of the complaint.
- Complaints should be addressed promptly in order of urgency and Heroes should be aware of any target timelines for resolving complaints.
- Complaint Handling team are empowered to either resolve complaints or be aware of, and have access to, the person who has the authority to do so.
- Where appropriate, special arrangements for responding to particular client groups should be put in place, for example, Indigenous Australians, children and young people, people living in regional and remote areas, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. This will help to ensure that the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable. Unreasonable complainant conduct is not allowed to become a burden.

- Complaint Handling Team deal with all complaints on their merit in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. They must ensure that any conflicts of interest are declared.
- Complaint Handling Team ensures the complainant and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint, is given sufficient opportunity to present their position, to comment on any adverse findings and is provided with reasons for decisions on the outcome of the complaint.
- Complaint handling systems have a review process in which the Complaint Handling Officer's decision is reviewed by a suitably experienced colleague or superior before the complaint is finalised. There is also be an independent internal review or appeal process.
- Officers receiving and handling complaints receive appropriate guidance or training, including for dealing with unreasonable conduct by the complainant or the subject of the complaint.

Personal information related to complaints is kept confidential.

- The personal information of the complainant and any people who are the subject of a complaint is kept confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint and any follow up actions.

If a complaint is upheld, the organisation provides a remedy.

- Our mechanism provides remedies when complaints are upheld and Heroes are familiar with them.
- Heroes are empowered to provide these remedies at the appropriate level, for example some appropriate remedies may be provided by front-line Heroes.
- Heroes give the complainant reasons for decisions relating to remedies.

There are opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the organisation's response to the complaint, and the complainants are informed about these avenues.

- There is an independent internal review or appeal process.
- Details of external rights of review or appeal for unresolved complaints are made available to complainants.

Accountability

Accountabilities for complaint handling are clearly established, and complaints and responses to them are monitored and reported to management and other stakeholders.

- There are clear responsibilities for handling complaints. This may include staff who are specifically assigned to deal with complaints and the names of these staff are communicated to Heroes.
- HCH has a 'fit for purpose' centralised system for recording and tracking complaints along with reasons for any decisions. This system is able to provide information on the demographic make up of complainants to enable an assessment of differing service delivery needs for people from a range of backgrounds.
- Remedies and proposed improvements to practices are followed up and acted on.
- Complaints and any actual or proposed improvements to practices is part of the organisation's internal reporting and planning process through such channels as Corporate Executive meetings and Strategic and Operational Plans.
- All correspondence relating to feedback and complaints is managed in accordance with HCH's record keeping plan, policies and procedures.
- The effectiveness of the complaint handling system is monitored, for example, through quality assurance or internal audit processes and reported to Corporate Executive along with recommendations for improvements to the system.

Complaints investigation and Resolution Process

<p>1. Assess the complaint</p>	<p>Clarify the issues of the complaint and what kind of resolution the complainant is seeking. If it is not a matter that can be handled by the complaints process, refer the complainant to a more appropriate process (e.g. an appeal process) or a more appropriate body such as the Ombudsman. For example, consider whether the matter is a public interest disclosure and should be handled under that process.</p>
<p>2. Seek resolution</p>	<p>Where appropriate and possible seek to achieve resolution. Where resolution is reached, document the agreed action. In this event it may not be necessary to continue with the investigation unless there are systemic issues that require further examination outside the complaint process.</p>
<p>3. Select the appropriate investigative approach</p>	<p>If the complaint is not resolved, determine what action is required, which may include options other than a formal investigation. This can depend on factors such as statutory requirements which may apply, the nature of the issue and the likely outcome of the investigation. Where possible, complaints should be resolved without the need for a formal investigation.</p>

4. Plan the investigation	Define the issues to be investigated and develop an investigation plan.
5. Ensure proper powers and authority	Assess whether the Complaint Handling Officer has the necessary powers to obtain evidence from relevant witnesses and to access relevant records. Ensure they have the authority to conduct the investigation, make a decision and resolve the complaint, or have access to a person who can make decisions and offer remedies.
6. Obtain evidence	Carry out the investigation by gathering sufficient reliable information to enable the issue to be properly addressed by proving or disproving matters relevant to the issue being investigated, taking into account all relevant information and no irrelevant information. At this stage, it may be necessary to refer any matters that may be misconduct or corruption to the Corruption and Crime Commission, the NSW Ombudsman or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
7. Reconsider resolution	Consider whether resolution is now possible.

<p>8. Reporting and recommendations</p>	<p>Prepare a document setting out the complaint, how the investigation was conducted, relevant facts, conclusions, findings and recommendations. Recommendations could include remedies for the complainant, action to improve the organisation's service delivery and action to address inappropriate conduct by an officer (e.g. through training, an appropriate disciplinary process or referral to an appropriate external authority).</p>
<p>9. Decide on the complaint and action to be taken</p>	<p>Refer the report to a person authorised to make a decision about the complaint and the action to be taken. After the decision is made arrange implementation of the agreed action and for follow up to confirm the action occurs.</p>
<p>10. Inform the parties</p>	<p>Upon completion of an investigation, the complainant (and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint) should be given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adequate reasons for any decision made; ● Any changes or action that have resulted from the complaint; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A remedy, where appropriate; ● Information on where to seek independent internal and external review (e.g. the Ombudsman).

Heroes Attitude towards Disputes

- HCH to encourage conversation between Heroes and Members
- HCH to help facilitate complaints and disputes
- Display understanding and compassion
- Refrain from negative words and tone when speaking or writing to clients or Heroes.
- Find solutions not more problems.
- Put yourself in the person making the complaints shoes.

Discuss any complaints or dispute with the rest of the HCH team and at HCH weekly meetings.

Blocking Members

1. Notify member that because issue cannot be rectified and we have to suspend their account. Explain that this is to maintain the integrity and trust of all members in our community.
2. Make account Inactive.
3. Members can have their Profiles re-assessed after 12 months.

Confidentiality

Home Care Heroes complaints handling process treats each person making a complaint in a manner that protects their privacy and respects their confidentiality by;

- Keeping their information safe and the details of the complaint private.
- Assessing the complaints and seeking a resolution in confidentiality.
- Mediating and negotiating conflicts between two parties as a neutral third party.

The Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) regulates how personal information is handled. The Privacy Act defines personal information as:

“...information or an opinion, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.”

Common examples are an individual’s name, signature, address, telephone number, date of birth, medical records, bank account details and commentary or opinion about a person.

The Privacy Act includes thirteen Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) which apply to some private sector organisations as well as to most Australian and Norfolk Island Government agencies. These are collectively referred to as APP entities. The Privacy Act also regulates the privacy component of the consumer credit reporting system, tax file numbers and health and medical research.

The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which are contained in schedule 1 of the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act), outline how most Australian and Norfolk Island Government agencies, all private sector and not-for-profit organisations with an annual turnover of more than \$3 million, all private health service providers and some small businesses (collectively called ‘APP entities’) must handle, use and manage personal information.